■ **News / A2**

Workers seek P65-P75 wage increase

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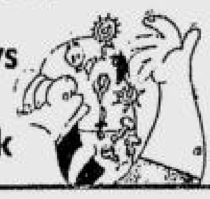
Football legend Maradona critically ill

■ **World / A9**

200,000 Hamas followers vow 'volcano of revenge'

■ **Lifestyle / D4**

10 easy ways to make yourself sick



Tanong ng Bayan / A18

Angara: Tulong o sagabal sa opposition unity?

NGAYONG ALAS-10 NG GABI SA ABC

Life worse for 44 percent of Filipinos, survey says

LIFE HAS worsened for many Filipinos, a polling outfit reported yesterday.

Forty-four percent of the electorate said their quality of life had worsened from a year ago, according to results of a nationwide survey that the Social Weather Stations (SWS) conducted last month.

LIFE/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Campaigners hold GMA look-alike tilt

By Yolanda S.-Fuertes
PDI N. Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—Move over, Ate Glow.

The National People's Caravan or the Biyaheng Gloria has launched a nationwide search for "GMA

CAMPAIGNERS/ A8

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Roco sets April 28 return

No medical bulletin but flight is booked

By TJ Burgonio, Michael Lim Ubac, and Jhunnex Napallacan

GUNG-HO about resuming "the fight," presidential candidate Raul Roco has set a date for his return: April 28.

Roco, standard-bearer of the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa who is undergoing medical treatment in the United States, gave the date during a phone conversation at about 10 a.m. yesterday with his running mate, former Tarlac Rep. Herminio Aquino.

"If we're lucky," he told Aquino, "it might even be earlier." But the April 28 flight has been booked.

"He was very upbeat, cheerful and bullish about the whole thing (campaign). He's prepared for his return physically, mentally and emotionally," Aquino said in a phone interview shortly after his conversation with Roco. "He told me: 'We're pushing ahead.'"

Aquino said doctors at a hospital in Houston, Texas, must have given the 62-year-old Roco a clean bill of health following a series of tests. "He would not be feeling like this if the results were not encouraging."

Roco's younger brother Facundo, designated family spokesperson on matters concerning the former education secretary's health, could not say if a medical bulletin would be released to the media this week.

Facundo and Aquino broke the news together during a hastily called press conference at Alyansa headquarters in Ortigas, Pasig City.

"This is the last two minutes," Aquino said, comparing the scenario to a hotly contested basketball game and predicting Roco's return to be "quite dramatic."

When its presidential bet comes back, he vowed, Alyansa would launch a "reinvigorated campaign ... from the national to the local lineups."

For sure, he said, the first thing

ROCO/ A8

Paradise regained: Estrada birthday bash at Tanay villa

By Armand N. Nocum

IT WAS paradise regained if only for a day for former President Joseph Estrada.

With a 12-hour pass from the Sandiganbayan, Estrada spent his 67th birthday yesterday as he fervently wished, at his 15-hectare estate across from his detention cell in Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

The site of the celebration was no less the star of the day than the celebrant and his VIP guests from politics, business and show business.

The celebrant himself took the INQUIRER on a guided tour of his estate.

Asking the INQUIRER to join him, he took a golf cart, one of two given him by President Macapagal-Arroyo last December, and drove to a one-room bungalow where he said he would like to live should the anti-graft court grant his petition to be detained at his private resort. It was closed.

The golf cart was used to shuttle guests as it is about a walk of 300 meters from the villa's gate to the main house.

Black and white swans glided on a man-made lagoon bordered by ancient trees. A gazebo equipped with a huge JVC flat screen TV, an opulent sofa and a mini kitchen over-

PARADISE/ A16

JOAN BONDOC

BIRTHDAY boy on his way to his Tanay estate is ambushed by a crowd of loyalists who wish him well on his 67th birthday. His guests included his family, former members of his Cabinet, KNP Senate bets and his Chinese-Filipino friends.

FPJ-Lacson unity talks postponed yet again

By Christine O. Avendaño and Norman Bordadora

WITH TIME running out, opposition presidential candidates Fernando Poe Jr. and Panfilo Lacson called off their one-on-one meeting yesterday, dimming chances they could come up with a united front against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Poe said the meeting did not push through because of "scheduling problems."

"*Di kami nagkatugma ng* schedule," Poe told reporters before leading a motorcade of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino around Valenzuela City in Bulacan.

Lacson gave the same explanation. "We have conflicting schedules," he said.

But Poe said the meeting with Lacson would be rescheduled.

He could not say though when the meeting would be held. "Hopefully, the sooner the better," said Poe, the standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP).

With less than three weeks before the May 10 presidential election, deposed President Joseph Estrada had publicly said that unifying the opposition behind a single candidate was the only way to beat Ms Macapagal, who had established a slim lead over Poe in the latest opinion polls.

Black propaganda against Lacson is not helping both camps to unify against the incumbent President.

Lacson branded as lies text messages that said he was withdrawing from the presidential race.

"It's a complete lie. It's a canard by those who want to muddle things. I'm not sliding down

FPJ-LACSON/ A16

Alyansa, Bangon camps also holding merger talks

By TJ Burgonio, Blanche S. Rivera and Volt Contreras

RACING against time, presidential aspirant Raul Roco's camp is holding talks with the party of evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva in a bid to hammer out a merger that "will have the highest impact."

A Roco strategist disclosed that the talks between the former education secretary's Alyansa ng Pag-Asa and Villanueva's Bangon Pilipinas started recently, even as Roco had sought treatment for back pains in the United States.

The strategist, who asked not to be named, said the talks would boil down to which of the two standard-bearers would slide down. Asked how Villanueva might be convinced to quit in favor of Roco, he simply said: "By discernment."

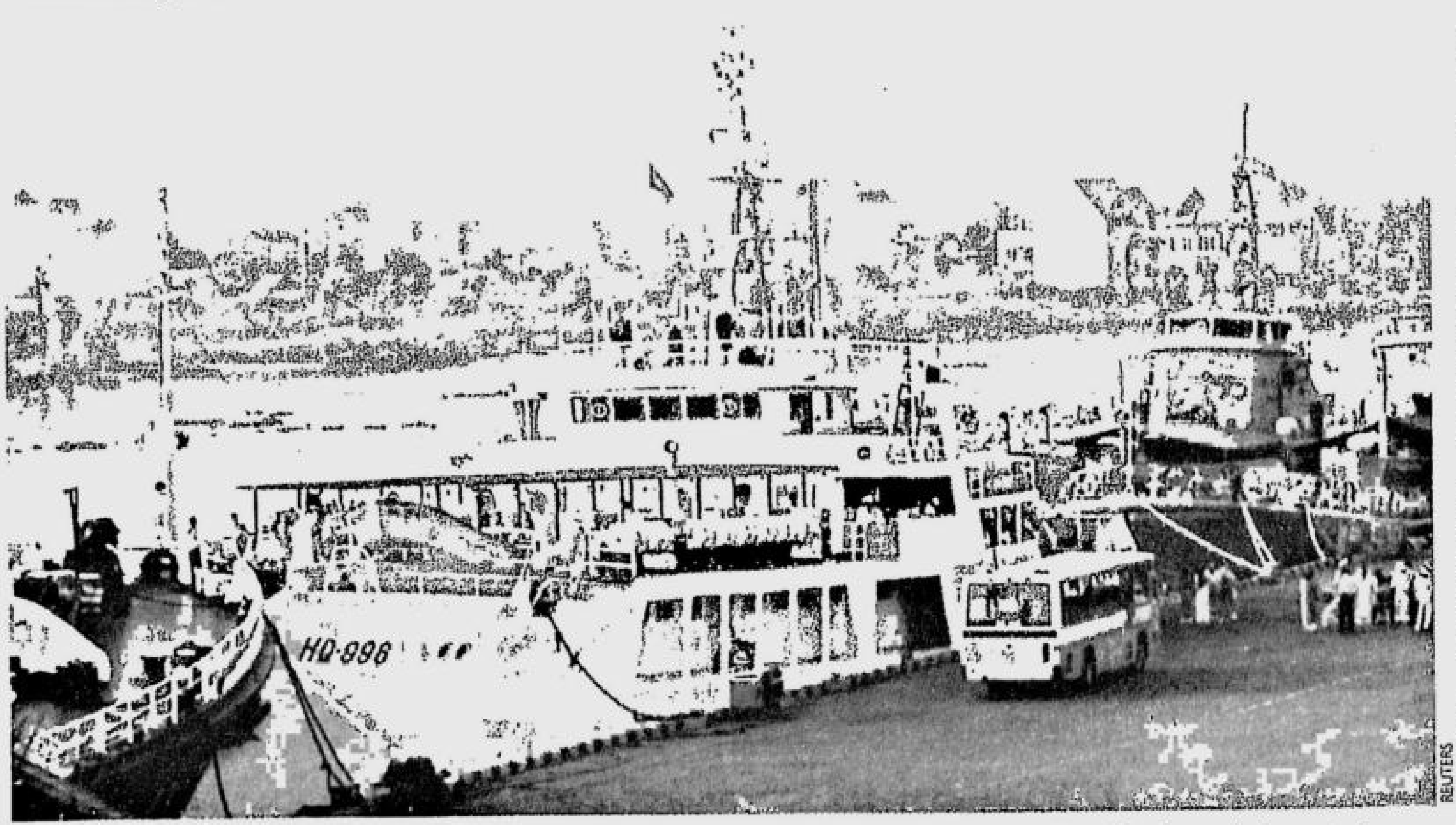
But from the Bangon camp, the word yesterday was merely that Villanueva would "adopt" Alyansa's candidates for vice president and senator if Roco's medical condition remained uncertain.

The Bangon insider told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that Villanueva's camp was expecting the Alyansa senatorial candidates to announce their decision today on whether to shift parties.

A well-placed Bangon source said some of the senatorial candidates gave Alyansa campaign manager Jaime Galvez-Tan and vice presidential candidate Hermie Aquino until yesterday to give them a clearer picture of Roco's health.

Alyansa senatorial candidate Perfecto Yasay Jr. confirmed the talks but only to say that they had taken place. Also, he said he believed that together, the two camps would "offset whatever lead GMA (President Macapagal-Arroyo) and FPJ (actor Fernando

ALYANSA/ A8



REUTERS

THE SPRATLYS is the tourist destination for these Vietnamese in Ho Chi Minh City who board a Navy ship on Monday on their way to the disputed islands in the South China Sea, claimed in whole or in part by six countries including the Philippines and Vietnam.

60 Viet tourists' visit to Spratlys raises furor

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES urged Vietnam yesterday to avoid raising tensions in the South China Sea as Hanoi sent off a controversial boat carrying tourists to the disputed islands over objections from its neighbors.

China had voiced opposition to the tour, and some diplomats had privately complained it was inconsistent with the code of conduct drawn up by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) for dealing with territorial disputes.

"We have to remind Vietnam that there is a code of conduct under which the signatories should refrain from committing acts that would disrupt the status quo in the region," acting Foreign Secretary Franklin Ebdalin told reporters.

"Claimant countries should not do things that would increase the tension," Ebdalin added.

Along with Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei, Vietnam, China and the Philippines claim sovereignty over all or part of the Spratly Islands, which straddle vital shipping lanes and fishing grounds and are believed to be potentially rich in oil.

Except for Brunei, all the claimants have military personnel in the archipelago of more than 100 islets, reefs and atolls with a total land mass of less than 5 sq. km.

Vietnam insisted on March 25 that it had "indisputable sovereignty" over the Spratlys, and that organizing such a tour within Vietnamese territory was "normal" behavior.

The 10-member Asean, which includes the Philippines and Viet-

60 VIET/ A16

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly over Mindanao.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/20/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Workers demand P65-P75 wage hike

WITH ABOUT two weeks left before Labor Day, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) and a newly formed coalition yesterday pressed the government for a "reasonable" increase of P65 to P75 in the daily wages for Metro Manila, but businessmen want discussions on it deferred after the elections, fearing it could be turned into a political issue.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday urged the regional wage boards to address workers' demands for a wage increase.

"I acknowledge the clamor of our workers for better pay and I believe ordinary Filipinos must not only be guaranteed jobs but also be paid well enough to sustain their daily family needs," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

"This is being done in a way that is acceptable to both the employers and the workers, and determined by the market as well as social and humane considerations," she added.

The two groups, which include organizations from both the militant and conservative camps, noted the continuing increase in oil prices, the rise in prices of utilities and basic goods and services, as the basis for the increase.

But industrialist Raul T. Concepcion said the wage hike issue should only be tackled when the heat of the political season had simmered down to ensure that any decision would be rational. There is plenty of time to discuss the wage hike issue which should give time for both employers and unions to discuss other alternatives, added Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive vice president Donald Dee.

The TUCP said it had filed a petition for a P75 across-the-board increase which would raise the minimum wage in Metro Manila from P280 to P355.

On the other hand, the Broad Alliance for Wage Increase or BAWI-65 coalition said it would push for a P65 wage increase and recovery package. It is also asking for a P3,500 wage increase for government workers, the suspension of the withholding tax or for higher tax exemptions, and for the government to shoulder payments for SSS, GSIS and Pag-Ibig contributions.

The TUCP admitted the P75 increase can only "partially" meet the basic needs of families, but added this would give "meaning and substance to the policy of equitable distribution of income and wealth." It also downplayed warnings that a wage hike could harm businesses and lead to shutdowns and layoffs. *Martin F. Marfil, Gil Cabacungan Jr., Juliet L. Javellana, Leila B. Salaverria, Tarra Quismundo*

Cops tighten watch on private armies

By Christian V. Esguerra

AN ELDERLY governor of a bustling province just south of Metro Manila. A Visayan mayor who once faced disqualification over his citizenship. A Cordillera mayor accused of ordering his rivals killed.

All have one thing in common.

They are among a significant number of politicians the national police are monitoring for allegedly maintaining "private armies" ahead of the May 10 elections, according to a government report shown to the INQUIRER.

All have armed bodyguards whose numbers are way beyond the two escorts allowed by the Commission on Elections.

Philippine National Police operations chief Director Avelino Razon said a candidate could have more than the authorized number of escorts depending on the threats to his life.

But only police and military personnel deputized by the Comelec are allowed to act as bodyguards.

PNP officials have tagged private armies—most of them composed of civilian gunmen—as possible sources of violence in the run-up to and during the elections.

The campaign trail has been paved with blood.

An official tally showed 58 people—including several local candidates—have been killed and 127 injured in political violence since the election "season" unofficially began in mid-December.

Poll-related cases of violence totaled 63 up to mid-April.

Incident to rise

Security officials have warned the number of violent incidents will likely rise as the campaign heads for the homestretch and political rivalries, especially at the local levels, sharpen.

One private army in Mindanao has as many as 200 members, armed with at least 120 high-powered firearms, according to the report.

The group, said to be maintained by an influential clan in Sulu, has been linked to a number of attacks against military targets.

The core of the private army of the elderly governor mentioned in the report consists of former and incumbent barangay officials.

They work under the guise of being part of the provincial government's official security unit, said the report.

The governor's army is but one of at least four private armed groups operating in the province, a bustling economy that once gained notoriety for being a "dump site" of crime victims.

Another group is maintained by a vice mayor in the same province, the report said.

A third gang in the province, composed of former police and military officers, had allegedly planned to liquidate Ombudsman officials investigating a town mayor for graft and corruption.

Identities withheld

The report identified all the politicians allegedly maintaining private armies but an official asked that they not be identified.

"*Baka mabulilyaso* (it might disrupt our operations)," the official said.

The report listed a total of 119 private armies in all regions of the country, except Metro Manila, as of April 15.

Their existence has aggravated the problem of loose firearms that have proliferated around the country—estimated at between 200,000 and 300,000.

In Masbate , the report said, a congressman and a mayor are suspected of maintaining their own private armed groups.

In a nearby province in the Visayas, two mayors also allegedly have their own "armies." One of the mayors had his citizenship questioned a few years ago, the report said.

Murdering rivals

An influential mayor in the Cordillera Administrative Region, the report said, maintains an 11-man private armed group. The mayor has gained an image of notoriety, having been accused of ordering the murder of his rivals.

The mayor's province registered eight election-related violent incidents in 1998. These included the killing of a barangay kagawad. The lone witness to the crime was beaten up, police said.

Almost all major political clans in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao are on the police watch list. Among them is an incumbent governor who has survived an ambush and whose predecessor was an ally of former President Fidel Ramos. *With Alcuin Papa*

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Namfrel finds dead persons, wrong info on voters' list

By Martin P. Marfil

WITH 21 days to go before the May 10 polls, the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) said yesterday it had discovered that the computerized voters' list for Metro Manila contained the names of dead people.

"*Maski patay makakaboto* (Even the dead will vote)," said Namfrel chair Jose Concepcion in a phone interview.

According to Concepcion, Namfrel was able to get copies of the National Capital Region voters' list from the Commission on Elections and found it to be rife with inconsistencies.

Aside from the names of dead persons, he said there were errors in basic voter information like names, addresses and precinct assignments.

Don Rapadas, Namfrel voting center manager from Lagro, Quezon City, said in a statement that a random check of the list for Lagro and Fairview had some names missing and others with the wrong addresses.

The computerized voters' list, Concepcion said, was the "biggest" problem of the elections.

Moreover, he said, the Comelec had not found a supplier for the indelible ink that would identify those who had voted to prevent them from voting again.

The voters' list, he said, was supposed to have been released by Feb. 10 but the Comelec failed to do this.

Another Namfrel officer, Edward Go, said he and members of his family checked the list and found that his and his wife's names were missing from the Taguig list—to which they had transferred—and the San Juan list—from where they had moved.

The names of their son and daughter appeared in the Taguig list but had the wrong birth dates, registration dates and addresses, even if they all lived in the same house.

A check with Comelec Taguig revealed that the elder Gos' names had been inadvertently left out of the list submitted to the Comelec central office.

Comelec Taguig has since updated its list and issued certifications to Go and his family.

Susan: Not a punch but normal reaction

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—It was not a punch but an instinctive reaction.

Actress Susan Roces yesterday denied punching Councilor Alan Celino while they were on a six-wheeler flatbed truck during a campaign sortie in Roxas City on Saturday.

She merely pushed Celino's hand away after he repeatedly touched her arm to make her wave to the crowds. "It was not a punch. It was just an instinctive gesture. I don't know why it is being blown out of proportion," Roces said.

"I don't want to make a big thing out of this. I don't know him (Celino) that well. I wouldn't want to prejudge him ... that (maybe) he was creating news. But if that was his intention, he succeeded because he is being talked about," Roces added.

Celino, who is running for vice mayor of Roxas City under the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, claimed Roces punched him in the chest. He admitted that he had repeatedly touched Roces in the arm to call her attention to the crowds on his side of the truck.

Roces said he exaggerated.

This is her version: She was in the truck, standing between KNP mayoral candidate Matilde Belo, who was on her right, and Celino who was on her left, trying her best to wave to the crowds.

"From time to time, *kuhiton nya ako* (he would touch me). He (wanted) to call my attention to people who wanted to shake my hand. Sometimes, he would lift my arm so that I would shake hands with them and (this went) on many times."

Roces decided to trade places with Celino.

"Nevertheless, he was (again) *making kalabit* (touching me) to get my attention (to wave at people) on his side," she said.

"So I made a gesture. *Ano ba? Kanina ka pa!* (Why do you keep doing that?)" she said, waving her hand to the side to demonstrate. *With Cynthia D. Balana and Juliet Labog-Javellana*

US cites AFP chief for fight vs terror

By Alcuin Papa

THE US government has conferred on Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Gen. Narciso Abaya the Legion of Merit award for his help in the fight against global terrorism.

The award was given despite reports that the US had reproached the Philippine government for not doing enough in fighting terrorism. Both Malacañang and the US Embassy denied there had been criticism made of any kind.

The Legion of Merit is awarded through an act of the US Congress for "exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services" and carries with it the title of Commander.

Gen. Richard B. Myers, chair of the US Armed Forces Joint Chiefs of Staff, presented the award to Abaya in ceremonies in Washington D.C. on April 8.

The award cited Abaya, a graduate of West Point, the US military academy, for playing "a pivotal role in furthering the outstanding military interaction between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States, contributing greatly to regional security and stability in Southeast Asia."

Abaya was also hailed for having "championed such issues as Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, (for) humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping and (helping) establish the Philippines as a key contributor to regional security affairs."

Operation Enduring Freedom was launched by the US government to hunt down al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan after the attack on the World Trade Center in New York and other US targets in 2000.

Abaya was also credited with "successfully degrading the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group, which allegedly has links to the al-Qaida terrorists network." At present, the ASG has around 400 fighters, a significant reduction from the more than 1,000 fighters at the height of the group's kidnapping activities in 2000.

The US government awards the Legion of Merit to allied countries' chiefs of defense and armed forces "who have exceptionally performed their responsibilities and have served for a minimum tenure of one year."

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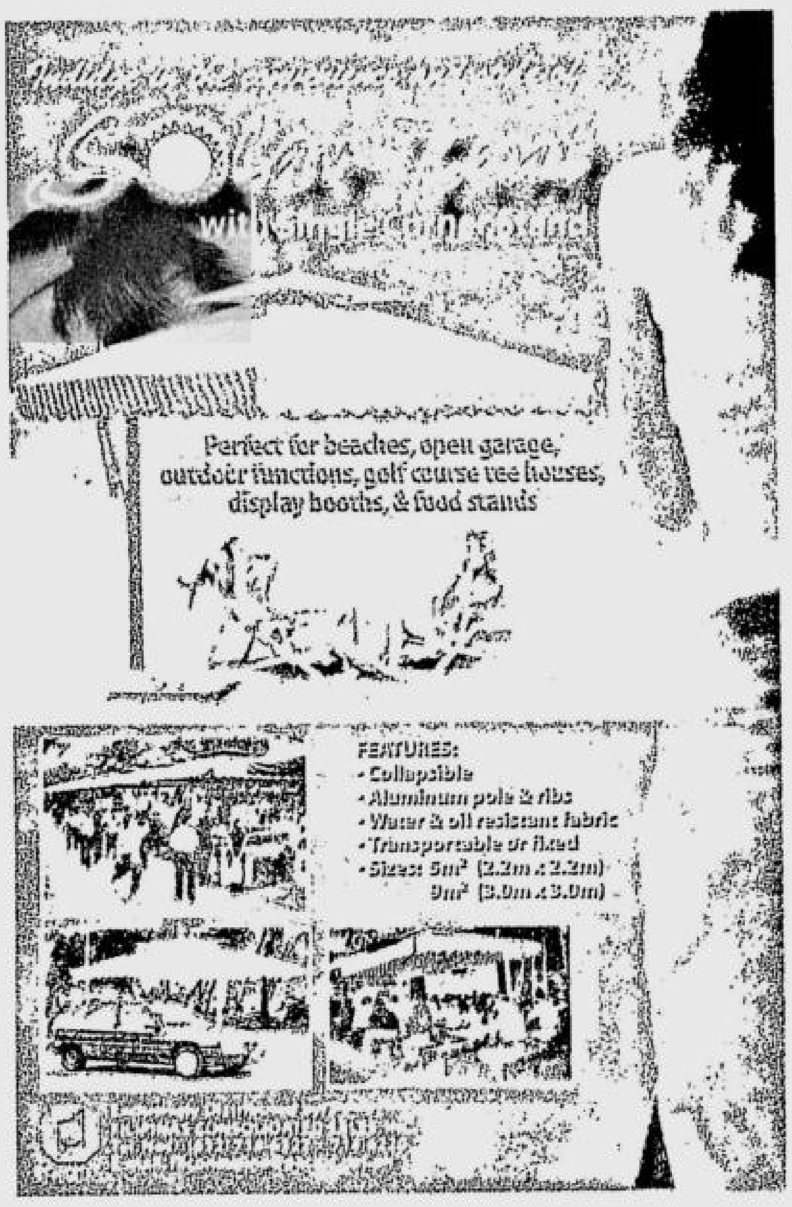

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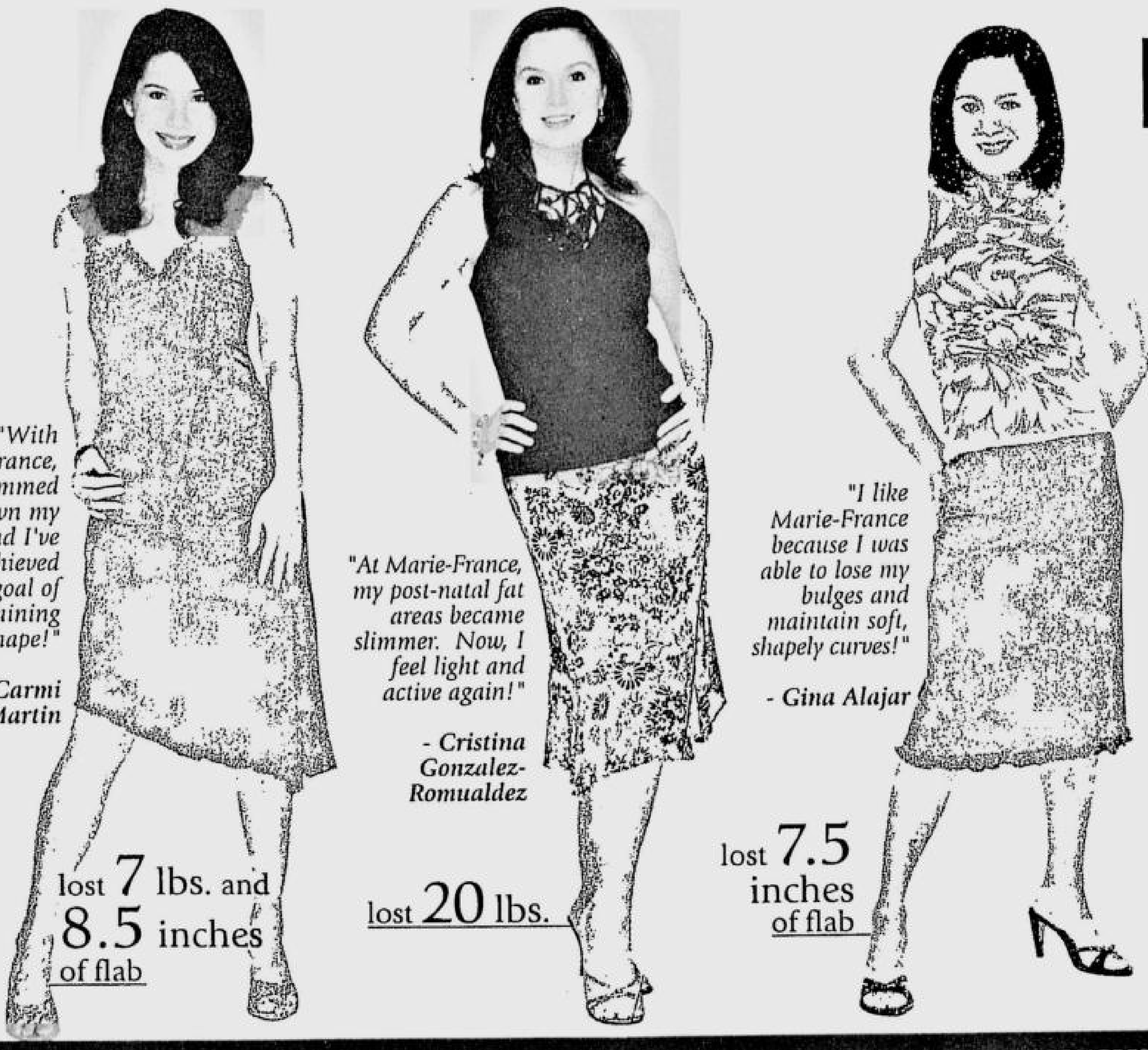

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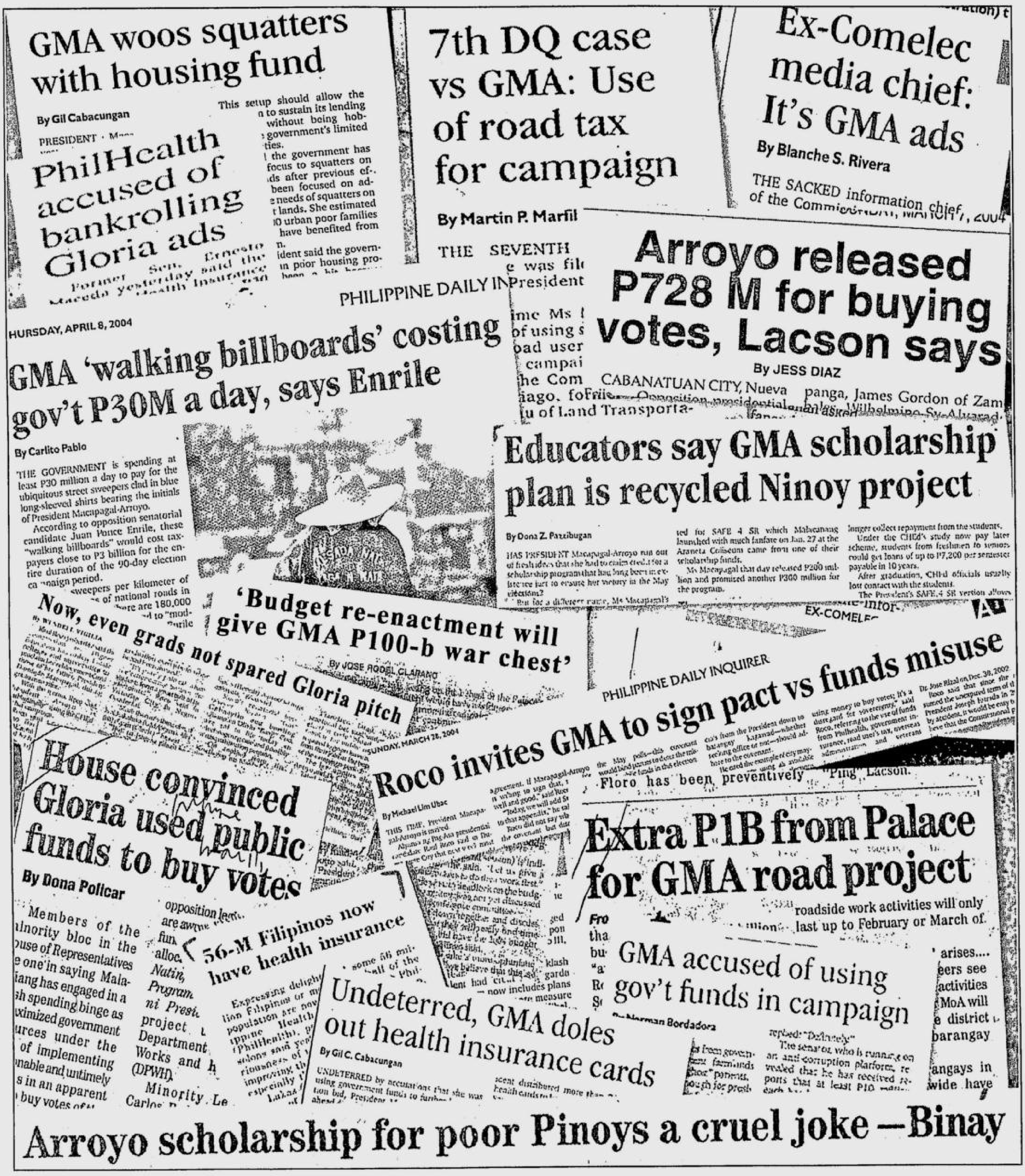

GMA woos squatters with housing fund

By Gil Cabacungan

PRESIDENT · Ma

This setup should allow the n to sustain its lending without being hob- government's limited ties.

the government has focus to squatters on ds after previous ef- been focused on ad- needs of squatters on lands. She estimated 0 urban poor families have benefited from n.

ident said the govern- n poor housing pro-

PhilHealth accused of bankrolling Gloria ads

Former Sen. Ernesto Maceda yesterday said the Health Insurance

7th DQ case vs GMA: Use of road tax for campaign

By Martin P. Marfil

THE SEVENTH e was fil President

ime Ms of using s oad user campai he Com iago. fo u of Land Transporta-

Ex-Comelec media chief: It's GMA ads

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE SACKED information chief of the Commi

PHILIPPINE DAILY IN

HURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2004

GMA 'walking billboards' costing gov't P30M a day, says Enrile

By Carlito Pablo

THE GOVERNMENT is spending at least P30 million a day to pay for the ubiquitous street sweepers clad in blue long-sleeved shirts bearing the initials of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

According to opposition senatorial candidate Juan Ponce Enrile, these "walking billboards" would cost taxpayers close to P3 billion for the entire duration of the 90-day election campaign period.

sweepers per kilometer of of national roads in here are 180,000 to "mod-

Arroyo released P728 M for buying votes, Lacson says

By JESS DIAZ

CABANATUAN CITY, Nueva

panga, James Gordon of Zam

Educators say GMA scholarship plan is recycled Ninoy project

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

HAS PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo run out of fresh ideas that she had to claim credit for a scholarship program that has long been in existence just to ensure her victory in the May elections?

But for a different name, Ms Macapagal's

ted for SAFE 4 SR which Malacañang launched with much fanfare on Jan. 27 at the Araneta Coliseum came from one of their scholarship funds.

Ms Macapagal that day released P200 million and promised another P300 million for the program.

longer collect repayment from the students.

Under the CHEd's study now pay later scheme, students from freshmen to seniors could get loans of up to P7,200 per semester payable in 10 years.

After graduation, CHEd officials usually lost contact with the students.

The President's SAFE 4 SR version allows

EX-COMELEC

'Budget re-enactment will give GMA P100-b war chest'

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

Now, even grads not spared Gloria pitch

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 2004

Roco invites GMA to sign pact vs funds misuse

By Michael Lim Ubac

THIS TIME, President Macapagal-Arroyo is invited

Floro has been preventively

"Ping" Lacson.

House convinced Gloria used public funds to buy votes

By Dona Policar

Members of the minority bloc in the House of Representatives one in saying Malacañang has engaged in a spending binge as maximized government urces under the of implementing nable and untimely s in an apparent buy votes of

opposition lea are aware fun alloc Natin Program ni Presi project Department Works and h (DPWH).

Minority Le Carlos

56-M Filipinos now have health insurance

Extra P1B from Palace for GMA road project

roadside work activities will only last up to February or March of.

GMA accused of using gov't funds in campaign

By Norman Bordadora

replied: "Definitely."

The senator, who is running on an anti-corruption platform, revealed that he has received reports that at least P10

Undeterred, GMA doles out health insurance cards

By Gil C. Cabacungan

UNDETERRED by accusations that she was using government funds to further

Arroyo scholarship for poor Pinoys a cruel joke —Binay

There is no justification for the diversion, misuse and abuse of billions of pesos in scarce public funds for obviously politically-motivated projects and programs three months before the May elections.
These crude machinations at the people's expense threaten the conduct of free, honest and fair democratic elections.
The Filipino people are not dumb. Nor are they deaf, blind or insensitive to the unconscionable raid on the national treasury in aid of election.

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RP bars Japan cult members

THE BUREAU of Immigration has barred two suspected members of Japan's Aum Shinrikyo cult from entering the country for being security threats.

The doomsday cult gained notoriety in 1995 when some of its members released deadly sarin nerve gas into the Tokyo subway system, killing 12 people and injuring thousands.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. issued an order placing Koichi Ninomiya and Hiroki Tsuno on the bureau's blacklist after receiving reports from the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo of their scheduled visit to Manila, the bureau said in a statement.

"Although the reports did not indicate that these two cult members planned to carry out terror attacks in Manila, the government cannot take chances by allowing the entry of aliens who are considered threats to our peace and security," Fernandez said.

The statement said Ninomiya and Tsuno had previously visited Manila.

The doomsday cult is still a threat to society, using businesses to expand its membership and remaining faithful to its convicted guru's violent teachings, the Japanese government said in a report Friday.

Followers of Aum Shinrikyo—whose former leader, Shoko Asahara, was sentenced to death in February—have set up more than 10 companies nationwide, including computer software makers, the Public Security Investigation Agency report said.

The cult, which changed its name to Aleph but remains under close surveillance by Japanese authorities, said the businesses were intended to raise funds to compensate victims of the subway gassing and other cult crimes. *AP*

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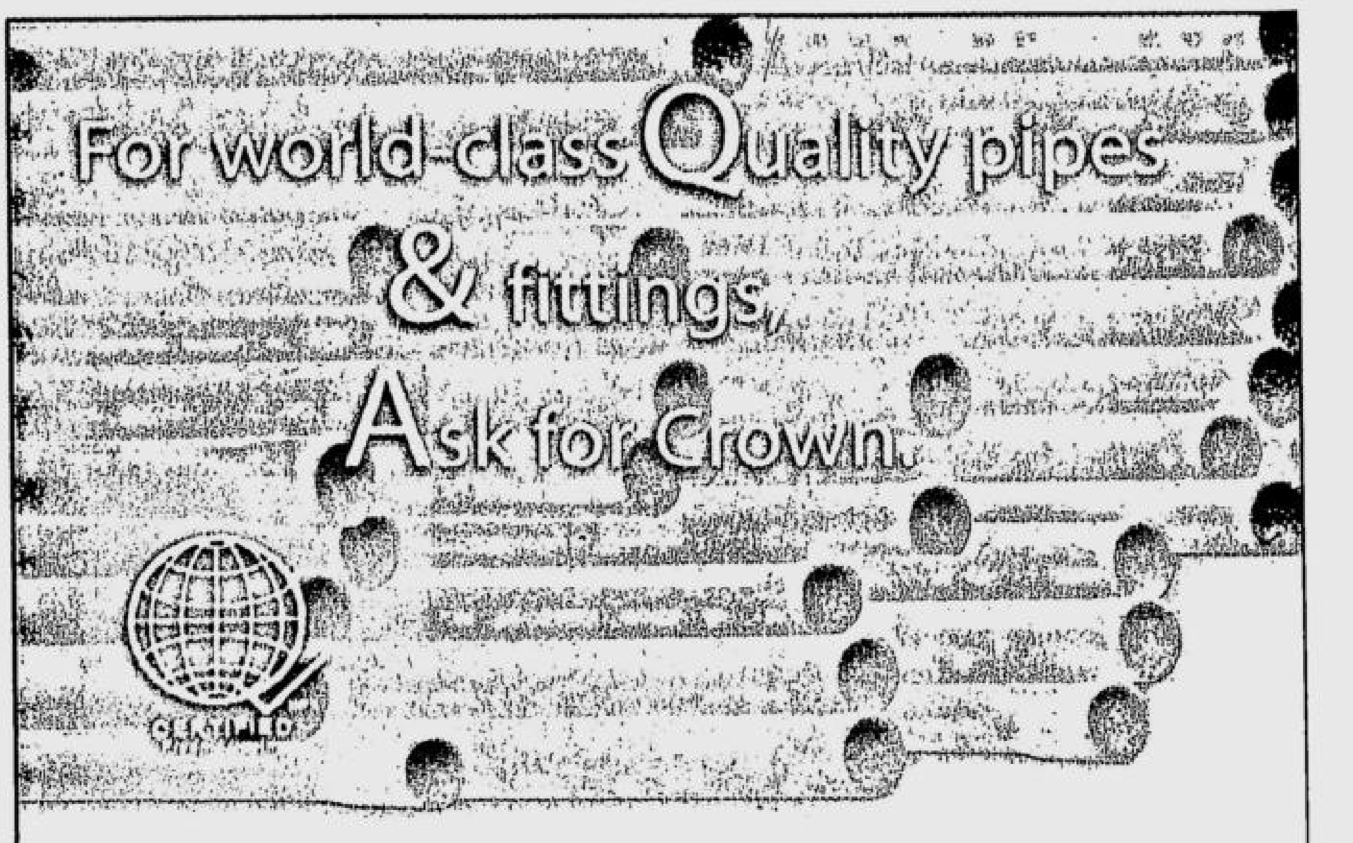

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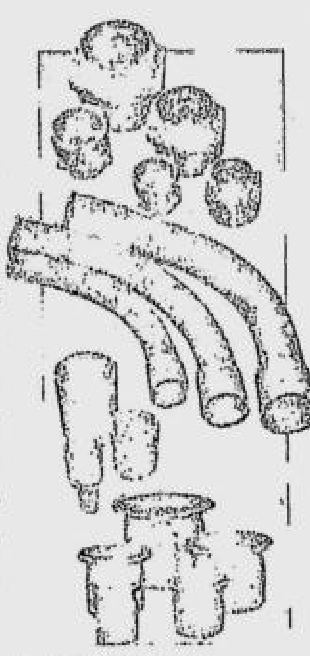

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2 cops die in light plane crash in Bulacan

By Christian V. Esguerra

TWO policemen were killed yesterday when a single-engine Cessna plane crashed and exploded on impact in Plaridel, Bulacan, during a training flight.

The fixed-wing plane crashed shortly after takeoff at around 4 p.m. in Barangay Agnaya, killing Senior Insp. Hernando Cardona and PO1 Ariston Garcia, police said.

Cordona was the instructor and Garcia the trainee in the flight that crashed in the airfield in Plaridel, said Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, Central Luzon police director.

Querol said the officers had just taken off when they heard an "unusual sound" coming from the engine.

He said the plane immediately lost altitude and exploded upon impact.

Eyewitnesses said the plane seemed to be experiencing engine trouble as it tried to ascend.

The Cessna 150 RP-85 crashed in the compound owned by Juan Jose Faustino in Agnaya.

The compound is still under construction and is near the training airport. *With a report from Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Erratum

IN YESTERDAY'S article, "RP assures Filipinos in Ireland of support" (p. A3), Mary McAleese was incorrectly described as the Irish Prime Minister. She is the President and head of state; the PM is Bertie Ahern. The story was based on a press statement issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 20, 2004
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 4:32-37
Gospel: Jn 3:7-15

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Because of this, don't be surprised when I say: 'You must be born again from above.'

"The wind blows where it pleases and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus asked again, "How can this be?" And Jesus answered, "You are a teacher in Israel, and you don't know these things!

"Truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and we witness to the things we have seen, but you don't accept our testimony. If you don't believe when I speak of earthly things, what then, when I speak to you of heavenly things? No one has ever gone up to heaven except the one who came from heaven, the Son of Man.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

Commentary

In Hebrew and Aramaic, the scholars tell us, the same word means "spirit," "breath," and "wind." These are well known and yet unknown realities. Of the four elements—fire, air, earth and water—only earth has fixed shapes; and in the long term even these shapes are not fixed. But the most volatile of the elements is air. The world is perpetually changing, and it's hard to "get a fix on it," as they say. But do we have to get a fix on it before we can live in it? Not at all. We live quite successfully with the unfixed and the unknown. In fact there is no fixity anywhere, except as a thought in the mind.

"Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything" (Qoheleth, 11:5). The words of Jesus in today's passage may be an echo of that verse. "The wind blows where it pleases … It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit." It is the same then with the Holy Spirit as with wind, spirit, breath.

Alan Watts once remarked that "a certain type of mind is frightened by the mutability, the elusiveness, and the mystery of life, and thinks of salvation as a state of everlasting fixity and certainty from which the disconcerting elements of spontaneity, surprise and mystery are largely removed."

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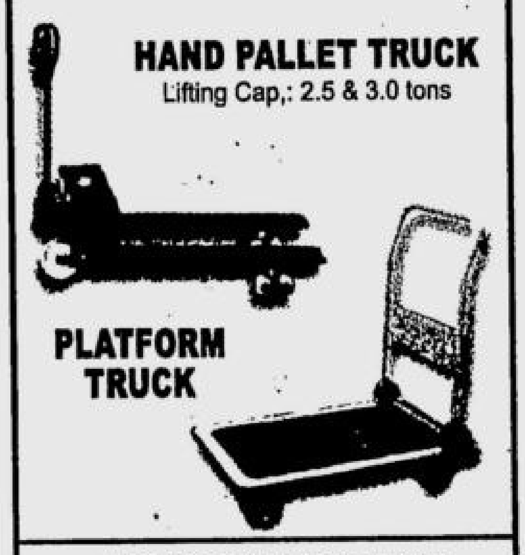

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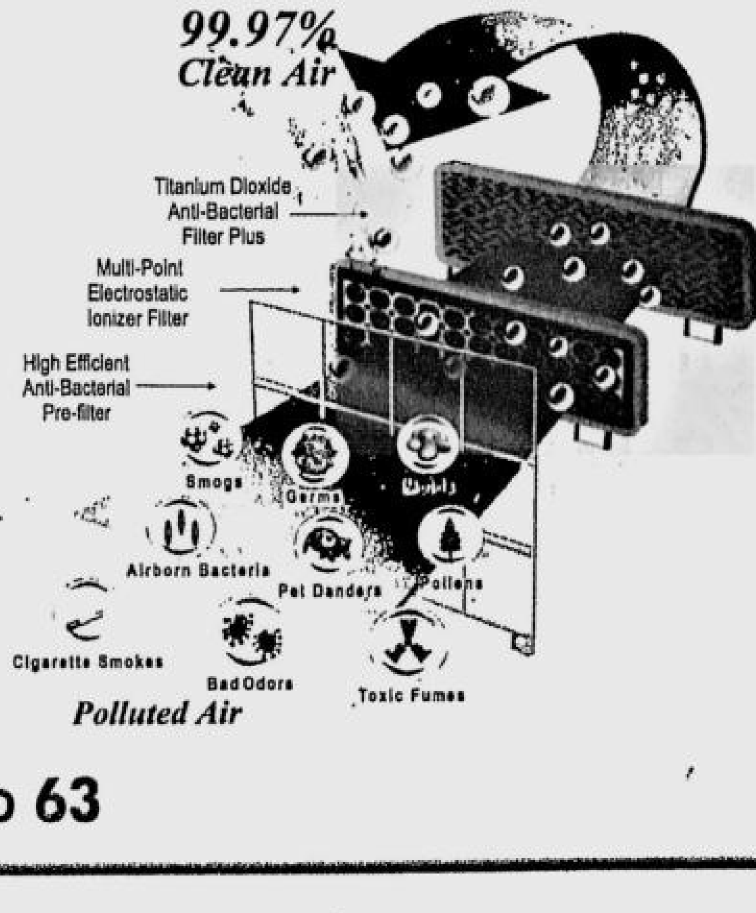

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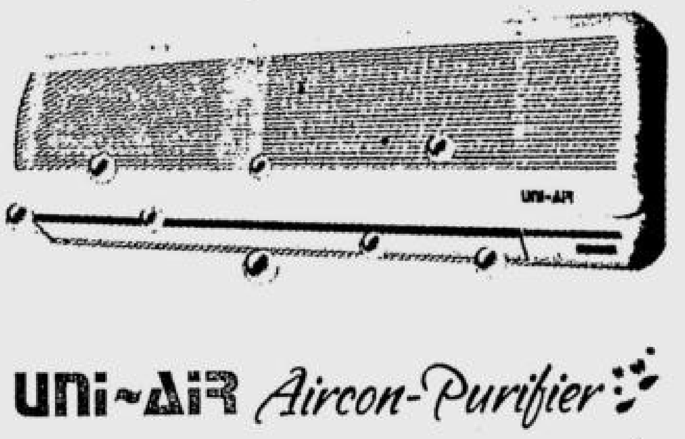

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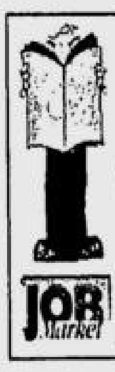
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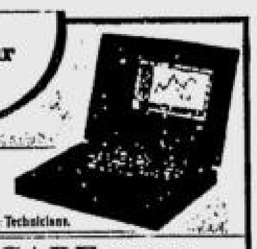

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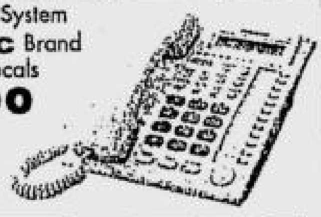

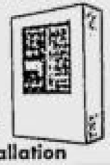

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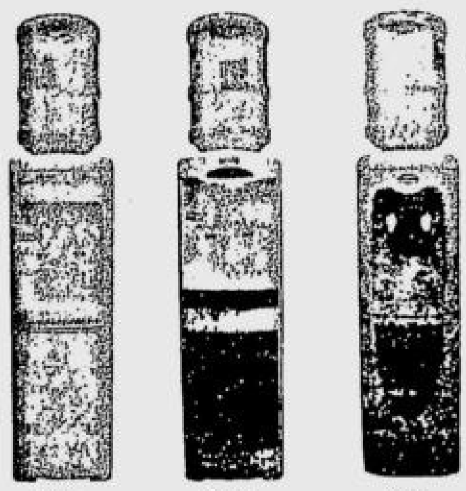

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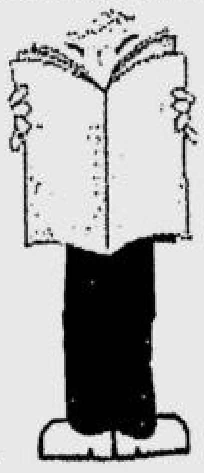

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Alyansa, Bangon camps also holding merger talks

From page A1

Poe Jr.) have now."

Ms Macapagal and Poe were neck and neck in the latest poll surveys, with Roco a far third.

Aquino, former Tarlac congressman, earlier said a merger with Villanueva's group would be the "easiest to effect" because their parties had similar programs.

"We have common points in our agenda, such as the fight against corruption and traditional political system, and the campaign for moral rejuvenation," he said.

Besides, he added, the two leaders are "close friends." Which is precisely why, the Bangon source quipped, it would not be unlikely that Roco would endorse Villanueva's candidacy.

In any case, Yasay pointed out, the Alyansa and Bangon had not agreed on anything with finality. The merger would be threshed out once a definitive report on Roco's condition comes out, he said.

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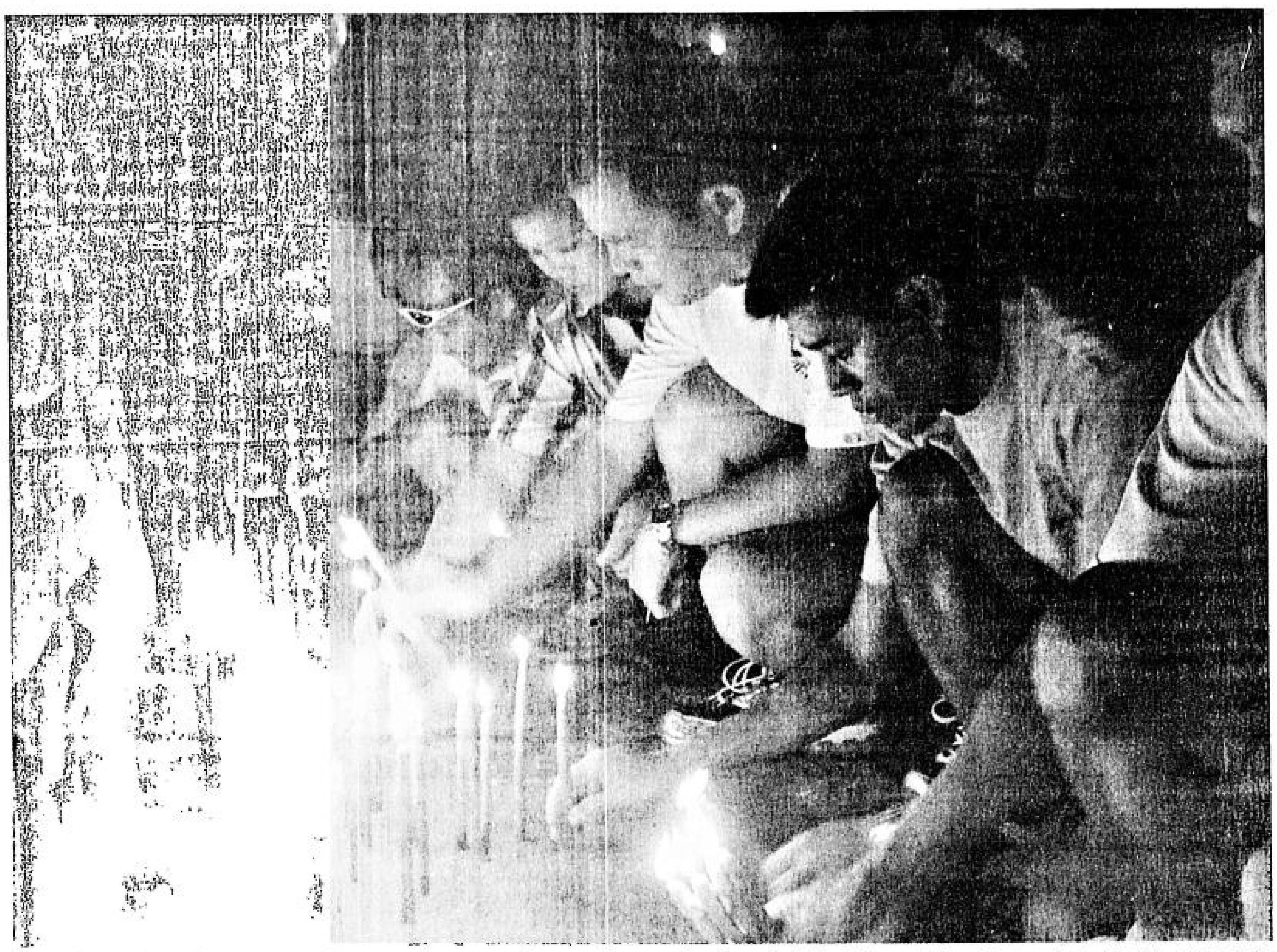

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"(Osmeña's announcement) has certainly boosted our morale," another Alyansa senatorial candidate, Perfecto Yasay Jr., said.

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Alyansa, Bangon camps also holding merger talks

From page A1

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Ms Macapagal and Poe were neck and neck in the latest poll surveys, with Roco a far third.

Aquino, former Tarlac congressman, earlier said a merger with Villanueva's group would be the "easiest to effect" because their parties had similar programs.

"We have common points in our agenda, such as the fight against corruption and traditional political system, and the campaign for moral rejuvenation," he said.

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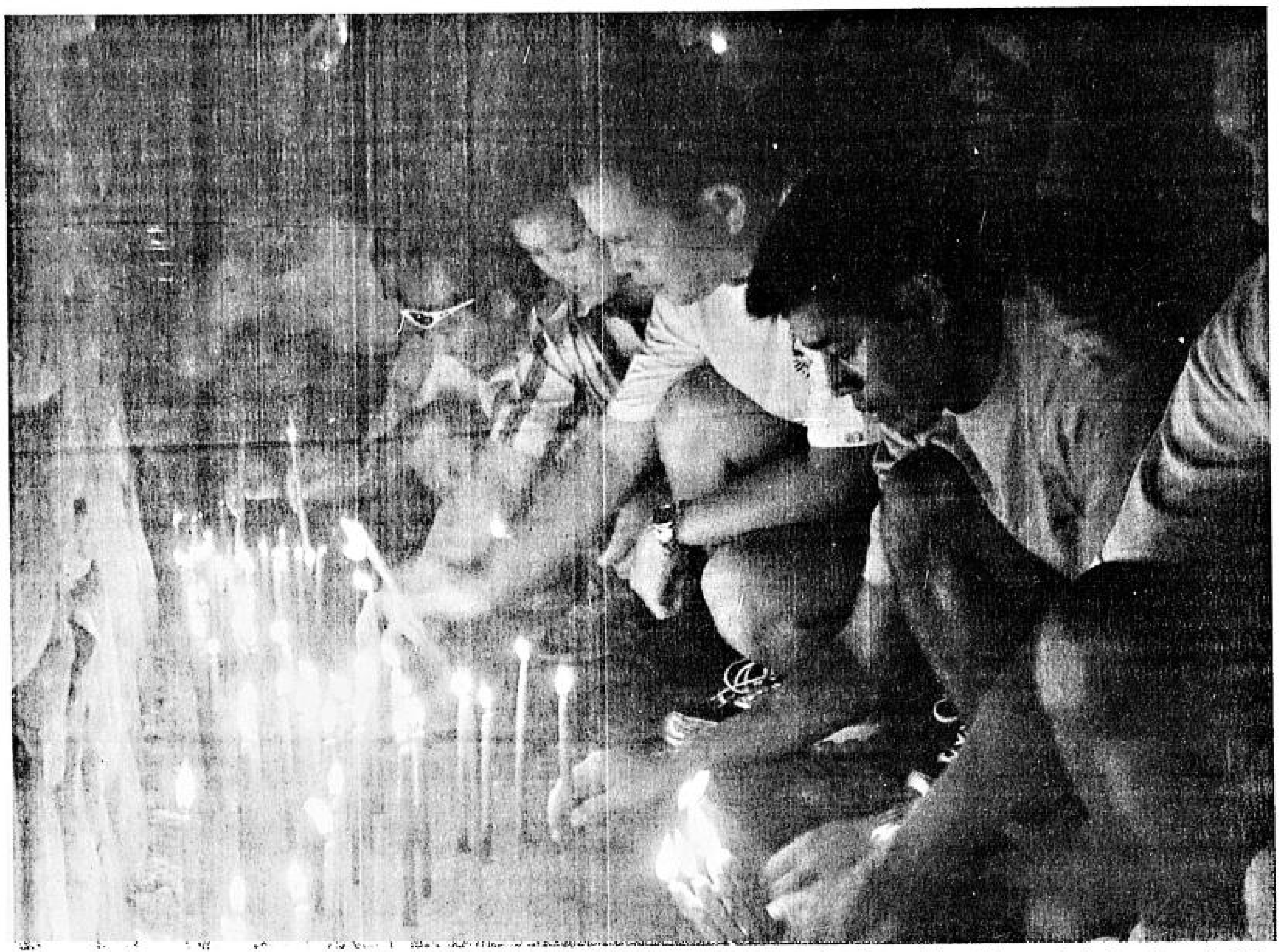

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Hamas promises 'volcano of revenge'

PALESTINIAN girls hold a copy of the Quran and portraits of Hamas leaders Sheik Ahmed Yassin, left, and Abdel Aziz Rantissi during an anti-American and Israel demonstration in Beirut, April 18. The demonstrators, some 5,000 mostly Hamas supporters, were protesting the assassination by Israel Saturday of Rantissi, less than a month after the assassination of Yassin in Gaza City. AP

GAZA CITY—Hamas threatened a "volcano of revenge" against Israel as some 200,000 Palestinians packed the streets of Gaza on Sunday for the funeral of the Islamic movement's assassinated leader Abdelaziz Rantissi.

But Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warned that Israel will strike at anyone threatening the Jewish state as the country began two days of ceremonies in memory of the six million Jews killed in the Nazi Holocaust.

Rantissi's killing late Saturday prompted a chorus of international condemnation, except in the United States, and sparked anti-Israeli and anti-US protests in Arab countries such as Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait and Tunisia.

US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice denied any advance knowledge of the attack. "The Israelis of course don't tell us that they're about to do something," she told Fox News.

The US government warned Americans in Jordan to stay away from the demonstrations, noting widespread suspicion that US officials had signed off on the slaying.

Rantissi was killed when an Israeli helicopter fired rockets into his car in Gaza City, less than a month after Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was killed in a similar attack.

Fearing that Rantissi's successor as head of the movement in the occupied territories could also be targeted by Israel, Hamas announced it had chosen a new leader but his identity would not be disclosed for security reasons.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon vowed that the targeting of "the leaders of terrorist organizations" would continue, while one of his ministers warned that Hamas' Damascus-based politburo chief Khaled Meshaal, now the movement's undisputed number one, would meet "an identical fate."

Later Sunday at ceremonies commemorating the Nazi genocide of the Jews, Sharon said Israel was aware of hatred against it and would strike would-be murderers.

"We will never allow the murderers of today, nor those of tomorrow to harm our people. Whoever dares will be struck," Sharon said at the Holocaust memorial at Yad Vashem.

"The state of Israel does not forget. It knows what hatred of Israel generated in the past. It is aware of the hatred around and knows how to cope," the premier said.

"We are oriented toward peace, because that is our dream and our will, but we will not put back the sword of our defense to the sheath," said Sharon.

A crowd of some 200,000 Palestinians took to the streets as close supporters carried Rantissi's flag-draped body from Gaza City's Shifa hospital on a stretcher to his family home and then to the main Al-Omri mosque.

"When the opportunity presents itself, we will deliver a widescale response. It will come," top Hamas figure Mahmud al-Zahar told mourners. *AFP*

I'm no traitor or spy, Israeli nuke whistle-blower says on eve of release

VANUNU in 1986 photo AP

JERUSALEM—Mordechai Vanunu, who is to be freed Wednesday after 18 years in prison for blowing the whistle on Israel's nuclear program, remains unrepentant and does not regard himself as a traitor, according to new footage.

"I am neither a traitor nor a spy. I only wanted the world to know what was happening" at southern Israel's Dimona nuclear plant, Vanunu said during an interrogation by security service agents which is to be broadcast on Israeli television Monday night.

"The whole world regards me as a hero and greatly appreciates what I did. It is only in Israel where thousands of people regard me as a traitor."

Vanunu, a former technician at Dimona, was sentenced in 1986 after leaking details of Israel's secret nuclear arsenal to Britain's Sunday Times newspaper.

Israeli agents lured Vanunu from London to Italy where he was kidnapped and brought to Israel. He was tried in secret and found guilty of "espionage."

He will be subjected to a series of restrictions after his release, including a ban on talking to foreigners or leaving the country.

Israel has firmly adhered to a policy of "nuclear ambiguity," never confirming or denying it possesses nuclear weapons. But foreign experts believe the Jewish state holds at least 200 atomic warheads. *AFP*

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Vanunu release may draw attention to Israel's 'bomb in the basement'

By Karin Laub

JERUSALEM—Eighteen years after he was kidnapped by Mossad agents, nuclear spy Mordechai Vanunu will go free this week—a moment Israel fears will refocus unwelcome attention on its "bomb in the basement."

Anti-nuclear crusaders are flying in from Europe and the United States for Wednesday's release, but they won't be able to embrace their hero.

Israel's security services, trying to quash celebrations and keep Vanunu silent, have barred him from speaking to foreigners, traveling abroad or even approaching foreign embassies for fear he might seek political asylum.

Vanunu, 50, said in remarks published Monday that he has no more secrets to spill beyond what he told The Sunday Times of London in 1986 about his nine years as a technician at the Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev Desert.

The United States and Europe already know everything they need to know about Israel's nuclear program, Vanunu told Shin Bet interrogators two weeks ago, according to transcripts published in the Yediot Ahronot and Maariv dailies.

"As for myself, I just want to repeat the things I already said and that were published," Vanunu was quoted as saying.

Vanunu said he hoped there will be renewed debate about Israel's nuclear program and that the Dimona reactor should be destroyed, "like the reactor in Iraq was destroyed." Israel bombed the Iraqi reactor in 1981.

Based on Vanunu's descriptions and photographs he secretly took inside the Dimona reactor, foreign experts said in 1986 that Israel has the world's sixth-largest stockpile of nuclear weapons.

Such revelations undercut Israel's policy of "nuclear ambiguity."

That policy was forged in the 1960s when Israel promised the United States it would not declare its nuclear status, test nuclear weapons or use them for political gain, wrote Israeli historian Avner Cohen on the website of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, an academic journal in the United States. In exchange, Washington did not pressure Israel to disarm.

Israel has kept the pledge, neither confirming nor denying it has nuclear capability. Some say that by drawing attention to its nuclear capability, Vanunu actually boosted Israel's security.

"There is no question that more than anybody, he (Vanunu) contributed to Israeli deterrence," said Cohen.

Vanunu is celebrated by anti-nuclear campaigners abroad. He received thousands of letters of support while in prison, was formally adopted by an elderly couple from Minnesota, and had celebrities and members of the US Congress lobby on his behalf.

But there is little sympathy for him in Israel, a country where just about everything is debated openly—except nuclear weapons.

Israelis believe the weapons are their last line of defense, "the ultimate guarantee that another Holocaust will not happen," said legal commentator Moshe Negbi. The consensus is that too much talk will only harm security.

Still, critics say, Vanunu's punishment was excessive, considering that he didn't reveal anything Israel's enemies didn't already suspect.

Yossi Melman, a journalist who writes about espionage, said Israel's treatment of Vanunu was meant to deter others from revealing secrets and served to distract attention from the security services' blunders.

Those in charge of security at Dimona ignored many warning signs that Vanunu was drawn into left-wing and pacifist circles while still working at the reactor, Melman said.

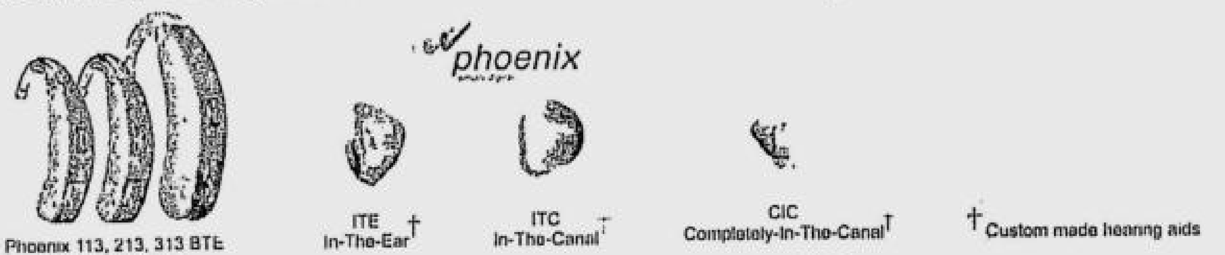
Vanunu said Israel shouldn't have trusted him with sensitive information and that the "bigshot psychologists" from the Shin Bet and the Mossad security services should have spotted him as a potential security risk. "You gave information to the wrong man," Maariv quoted him as saying. However, he insisted he was not a spy.

Vanunu was snatched from Rome by the Mossad in 1986 after being lured into a rendezvous by a female agent, smuggled to Israel by yacht, tried behind closed doors and sentenced to 18 years for treason.

He spent 12 of those years in solitary confinement, earning him a mention in the 1998 edition of Guinness World Records as the prisoner held in isolation the longest.

In the first 2 1/2 years, Vanunu was under 24-hour video surveillance, with fluorescent lights on at all times in his windowless cell, said his brother Meir. He was allowed a one-hour daily walk in a yard shrouded in canvas to prevent him from signaling other prisoners. His only human contact was a guard and a family visit every two weeks.

The crushing isolation harmed Vanunu's mental health, according to his brother, an opinion backed by former Israeli legislator Yossi Katz, who met him in 1998. Vanunu suffered from delusions, but improved after getting out of solitary, those close to him said. *AP*



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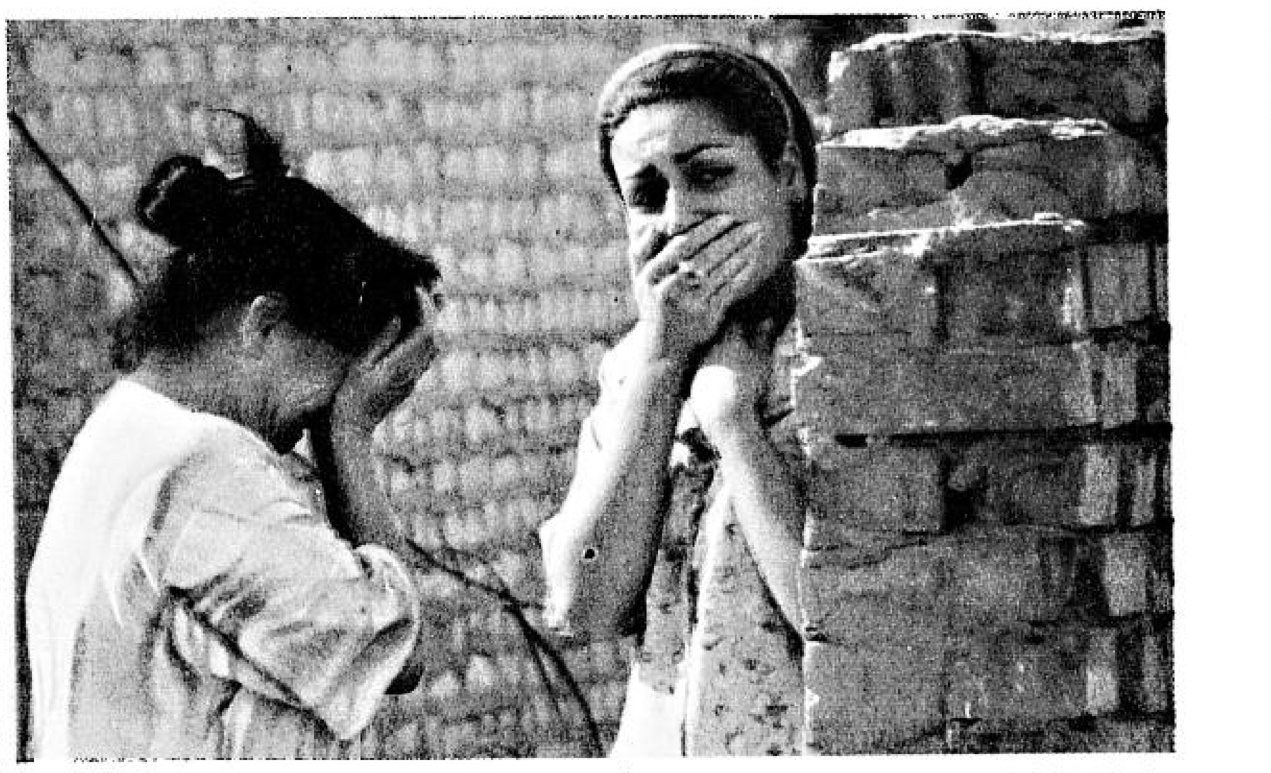
In Baghdad, the Shiite Dawa party said its representatives held a "positive" meeting with the US-led coalition to revive a stalled mediation for a peaceful resolution of the standoff with Sadr in the holy Shiite cities of Najaf and Karbala.

"We met (US overseer Paul) Bremer. We feel that this contact was positive and that the coalition is prepared to resolve the crisis peacefully," said Adnan Ali al-Kazem, an aide to Dawa party chief Ibrahim Jaafari.

He said Dawa planned to meet with Sadr Monday to discuss how to revive the negotiations.

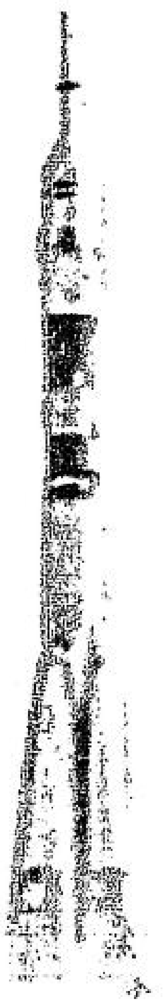
A spokesperson for Sadr's office in Najaf, Qais al-Khazaali, said Saturday that the mediation had stalled because of obstacles put up by the US side. "We are expecting the Americans to attack Najaf any moment now," he said.

But a senior coalition spokesperson in Baghdad said the coalition remained open to mediation although US troops were massed outside Najaf under orders to capture or kill Sadr. *AFP*



GRIEF ACROSS LINES—Iraqi women weep during the funeral procession of Iraqi man Ali Yonis Jaffer, 68, who was killed Saturday night in his house during an air strike in the Baghdad suburb of Al-Doura, Iraq, April 18. AP

3 million worms aboard rocket heading for ISS



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The Ice-first project is one of 21 experiments that Kuipers, an astronaut from the European Space Agency (ESA), would conduct over his nine-day mission at the station, his maiden voyage to space.

"The C. Elegans have a lot of common genes with humans, hence their importance for the scientists who had deciphered their complete genetic code," explained Nathaniel Szewczyk, a researcher with Nasa's Ames Center, which is taking part in the project.

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The information garnered from the experiment could be used to counter harmful radiation for long space flights to destinations like Mars, which would require up to a two-year-long voyage, he said.

The millimeter-long worms would for the most part be frozen upon their return to Earth and divided between the different laboratories participating in the project.

Radiation's effects on the worms' genetic stability would be for example examined in Canada, while US and French researchers would study the effects of weightlessness on the worms' muscles. AFP

RUSSIAN Soyuz TMA-4 craft blasts off the Russia's Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, April 19, to the International Space Station with a crew of three on board. REUTERS

PM orders Spanish troops out of Iraq

MADRID—Spain's new Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero Sunday ordered his country's troops to withdraw from Iraq "as soon as possible" as he said Madrid's conditions for maintaining the contingent in the US-led coalition appear unlikely to be fulfilled.

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"I have given the order to the defense minister to take the necessary measures so that Spanish troops are withdrawn from Iraq as soon as possible and with maximum security," Zapatero said in an address on Spanish television a day after formally taking office.

"It does not look like a UN resolution will match the content" of the Spanish demands for the continued presence of the troops, the prime minister said.

US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Friday pledged to give the United Nations a central role in the transfer of power to the Iraqi interim government, planned for June 30.

The move was seen as a way to keep countries like Spain on board with the US-led coalition, despite a recent surge in violence and hostage-taking in Iraq.

Zapatero gave no details on the timetable for the withdrawal, but government sources said the pullout could take place over about 50 days.

A foreign ministry official in Cairo said Spain's Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos had informed Egyptian counterpart Ahmed Maher that Madrid plans to pull its troops out of Iraq "within 15 days," but Maher later said that no specific timeframe was mentioned.

The White House said the United States would continue its close cooperation with Spain in the war against terrorism despite the decision.

"We will work with our coalition partners in Iraq and the Spanish government and expect they will implement their decision in a coordinated, responsible and orderly manner," White House spokesperson Ken Lisaius said.

A US state department official said the Spanish decision was not unexpected in Washington.

"This is not unexpected. We recognized they were going to do this," the official said on condition of anonymity.

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In Warsaw, Poland's Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski expressed surprise at the Spanish move.

"We were expecting such a decision will be taken when a renewal of the contingent" takes place in a few days, he told public television.

But he said Poland would not be sending additional troops to replace the Spanish soldiers. *AFP*

Kim in Beijing for talks

KIM

BEIJING—Reclusive North Korean leader Kim Jong-il arrived unannounced in Beijing on Monday and went straight into talks on his nuclear weapons ambitions after Washington urged Beijing to push to end the crisis.

Kim, whose special train drew into Beijing after an overnight journey from Pyongyang, will be in China for up to four days, during which he expects to meet his counterpart, military chief Jiang Zemin, and do some sightseeing, said a Chinese source familiar with the talks.

He met President and Communist Party chief Hu Jintao for lunch in the high-walled Zhongnanhai leaders' compound and for talks dominated by the nuclear crisis and the North's economic and food problems, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said.

Kim was likely to tour a Beijing high-tech zone dubbed "China's Silicon Valley," it said.

Solving the nuclear issue is key to unlocking outside aid to the ailing and isolated North Korean economy, including from China, the North's closest friend.

Kim's trip, cloaked in the secrecy that traditionally surrounds his rare overseas journeys, comes less than a week after US Vice President Dick Cheney warned in Beijing that time was running out to resolve the crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions that has gripped North Asia since late 2002.

China's leaders are likely to dangle the prospect of economic help while repeating that they oppose a nuclear-armed Pyongyang and insist on a peaceful resolution to a problem that has enraged Washington and triggered nervousness among neighbors.

"Putting pressure on North Korea isn't a good way to do things," said Korea expert Piao Jianyi with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "But we have emphasized all along that the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully."

Kim's first visit to China in three years was expected to last about four days. His previous two trips were not publicized until after he left.

Chinese officials declined formally to confirm the visit but a second source said Kim had originally been scheduled to visit last week.

"The arrangements are being kept secret," he said. "He was supposed to have arrived last week. But it was delayed because things had not been sorted out."

Cheney was in Beijing last Tuesday and Wednesday. And Thursday marked the 92nd anniversary of the birth of Kim's father, North Korea's late founder Kim Il-sung.

The first sign of his arrival was a convoy of unmarked cars, including a black Mercedes limousine, that pulled out of Beijing's main railway-station. The station was guarded by military police and an official said it was closed for the arrival of a special visitor, whose identity was a secret. *Reuters*

Study says thousands of innocents in US jails

A COMPREHENSIVE study of 328 criminal cases over the last 15 years in which the convicted person was exonerated suggests that there are thousands of innocent people in prison today.

Almost all of the exonerations were in murder and rape cases, and that implies, according to the study, that many innocent people have been convicted of less serious crimes. But the study says they benefited from neither the intense scrutiny that murder cases tend to receive nor from the DNA evidence that can categorically establish the innocence of people convicted of rape.

Prosecutors, however, have questioned some of the methodology used in the study, which was prepared at the University of Michigan and supervised by a law professor there, Samuel R. Gross. They say that the number of exonerations is quite small compared with the number of convictions during the 15-year period. About 2 million people are in American prisons and jails.

The study identified 199 murder exonerations, 73 of them in capital cases. It also found 120 rape exonerations. Only nine cases involved other crimes. In more than half of the cases, the defendants had been in prison for more than 10 years.

The study's authors said they picked 1989 as a starting point because that was the year of the first DNA exoneration. Of the 328 exonerations they identified in the intervening years, 145 involved DNA evidence.

In 88 percent of the rape cases in the study, DNA evidence helped free the inmate. But biological evidence is far less likely to be available or provide definitive proof in other kinds of cases. Only 20 percent of the murder exonerations involved DNA evidence, and almost all of those were rape-murders.

The study, which will be presented Friday at a conference of defense lawyers in Austin, Texas, also found that very different factors contributed to wrongful convictions in rape and murder cases. *New York Times*

Bush to face what he dreads most–live news presscon

By Elisabeth Bumiller

WASHINGTON—As Iraq continued to fall into chaos on the Thursday before Easter, the vacationing President George W. Bush decided he would have to submit to an event he hates: a live prime-time news conference in the classical grandeur of the East Room of the White House.

Bush, like most modern presidents, views big news conferences with dread. He has held evening extravaganzas in the historic room where Abraham Lincoln lay in state only when he is at an international crisis point of his presidency.

Bush has so far had 12 solo news conferences, far fewer than any other president, and only three of them have been at night in the East Room. The first of those was on Oct. 11, 2001, four days after the United States began bombing Afghanistan. The second was on March 6, 2003, less than two weeks before the US-led invasion of Iraq. The third was last Tuesday, after weeks of bloodshed in Iraq threw the White House into a defensive crouch.

Administration officials said the goal at Tuesday's news conference was to regain control of the national political conversation and to explain to Americans the president's reasons for remaining in Iraq. Whether Bush's performance accomplished that—his supporters called him passionate and unwavering, his critics called him inarticulate and unfocused—the event revealed a lot about the amount of presidential time and planning that goes into what Bush's aides, like all White House aides, call a highly risky hour with a huge potential for mistakes.

"We prepared for a lot of questions that weren't asked," said Dan Bartlett, the White House communications director. For example, he said, Bush had expected to be queried about the rebel anti-American Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The anticipated question, Bartlett said, was, "Was it a mistake not to take out Sadr four months ago?" Bartlett would not say what Bush's answer would have been.

White Houses aides from previous administrations said that Bush's aides clearly would have preferred the safe haven of a speech to the nation, but that they knew how difficult it would have been in an election year to get air time from networks that would have seen a speech as partisan politics.

"If they had gone to the networks and said, 'The president wants to make a speech to the country on Iraq,' they would have said, 'Does he have any news to make?'" said David R. Gergen, who worked in the Nixon, Ford, Reagan and Clinton White Houses. "And they would have said, 'He wants to make sure people understand his reasoning.' And they would have said, 'That's very nice, we'll show it on cable.'"

But a news conference is considered news, and, Gergen said, it is the best way for the president to reach a large prime-time audience, however unpleasant the setting for him. *New York Times*

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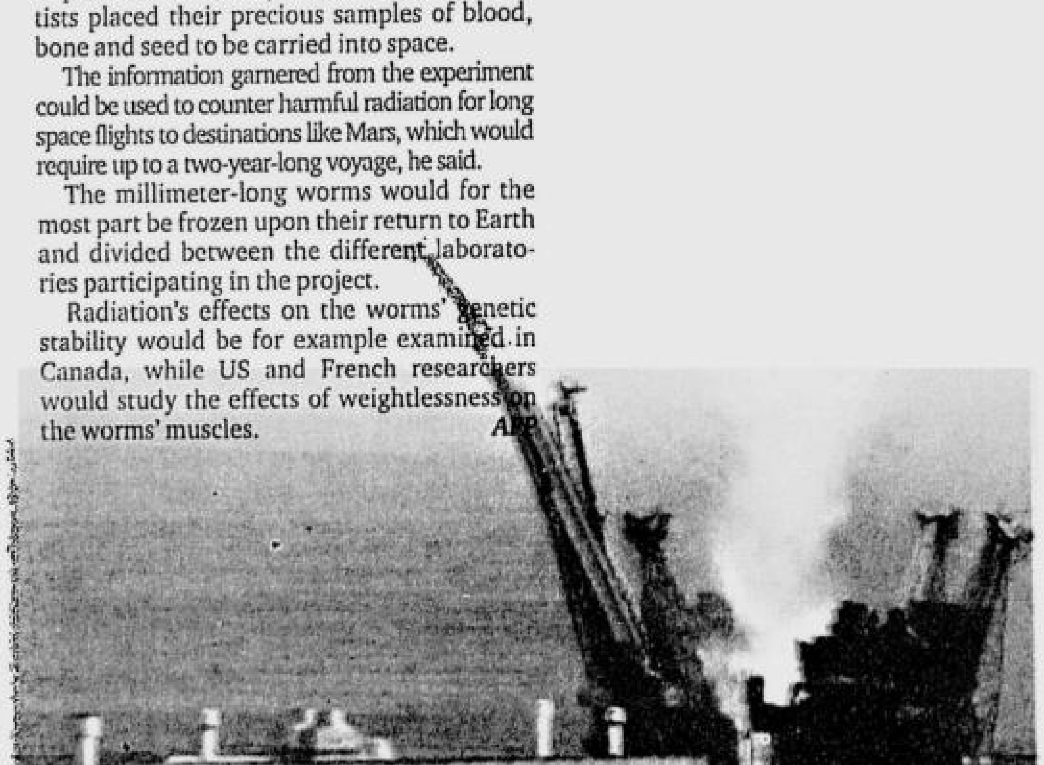

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Kim in Beijing for talks

BEIJING—Reclusive North Korean leader Kim Jong-il arrived unannounced in Beijing on Monday and went straight into talks on his nuclear weapons ambitions after Washington urged Beijing to push to end the crisis.

Kim, whose special train drew into Beijing after an overnight journey from Pyongyang, will be in China for up to four days, during which he expects to meet his counterpart, military chief Jiang Zemin, and do some sightseeing, said a Chinese source familiar with the talks.

He met President and Communist Party chief Hu Jintao for lunch in the high-walled Zhongnanhai leaders' compound and for talks dominated by the nuclear crisis and the North's economic and food problems, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said.

Kim was likely to tour a Beijing high-tech zone dubbed "China's Silicon Valley," it said.

Solving the nuclear issue is key to unlocking outside aid to the ailing and isolated North Korean economy, including from China, the North's closest friend.

Kim's trip, cloaked in the secrecy that traditionally surrounds his rare overseas journeys, comes less than a week after US Vice President Dick Cheney warned in Beijing that time was running out to resolve the crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions that has gripped North Asia since late 2002.

China's leaders are likely to dangle the prospect of economic help while repeating that they oppose a nuclear-armed Pyongyang and insist on a peaceful resolution to a problem that has enraged Washington and triggered nervousness among neighbors.

"Putting pressure on North Korea isn't a good way to do things," said Korea expert Piao Jianyi with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "But we have emphasized all along that the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully."

KIM

Kim's first visit to China in three years was expected to last about four days. His previous two trips were not publicized until after he left.

Chinese officials declined formally to confirm the visit but a second source said Kim had originally been scheduled to visit last week.

"The arrangements are being kept secret," he said. "He was supposed to have arrived last week. But it was delayed because things had not been sorted out."

Cheney was in Beijing last Tuesday and Wednesday. And Thursday marked the 92nd anniversary of the birth of Kim's father, North Korea's late founder Kim Il-sung.

The first sign of his arrival was a convoy of unmarked cars, including a black Mercedes limousine, that pulled out of Beijing's main railway station. The station was guarded by military police and an official said it was closed for the arrival of a special visitor, whose identity was a secret. *Reuters*

Study says thousands of innocents in US jails

A COMPREHENSIVE study of 328 criminal cases over the last 15 years in which the convicted person was exonerated suggests that there are thousands of innocent people in prison today.

Almost all of the exonerations were in murder and rape cases, and that implies, according to the study, that many innocent people have been convicted of less serious crimes. But the study says they benefited from neither the intense scrutiny that murder cases tend to receive nor from the DNA evidence that can categorically establish the innocence of people convicted of rape.

Prosecutors, however, have questioned some of the methodology used in the study, which was prepared at the University of Michigan and supervised by a law professor there, Samuel R. Gross. They say that the number of exonerations is quite small compared with the number of convictions during the 15-year period. About 2 million people are in American prisons and jails.

The study identified 199 murder exonerations, 73 of them in capital cases. It also found 120 rape exonerations. Only nine cases involved other crimes. In more than half of the cases, the defendants had been in prison for more than 10 years.

The study's authors said they picked 1989 as a starting point because that was the year of the first DNA exoneration. Of the 328 exonerations they identified in the intervening years, 145 involved DNA evidence.

In 88 percent of the rape cases in the study, DNA evidence helped free the inmate. But biological evidence is far less likely to be available or provide definitive proof in other kinds of cases. Only 20 percent of the murder exonerations involved DNA evidence, and almost all of those were rape-murders.

The study, which will be presented Friday at a conference of defense lawyers in Austin, Texas, also found that very different factors contributed to wrongful convictions in rape and murder cases. *New York Times*

Bush to face what he dreads most–live news presscon

By Elisabeth Bumiller

WASHINGTON—As Iraq continued to fall into chaos on the Thursday before Easter, the vacationing President George W. Bush decided he would have to submit to an event he hates: a live prime-time news conference in the classical grandeur of the East Room of the White House.

Bush, like most modern presidents, views big news conferences with dread. He has held evening extravaganzas in the historic room where Abraham Lincoln lay in state only when he is at an international crisis point of his presidency.

Bush has so far had 12 solo news conferences, far fewer than any other president, and only three of them have been at night in the East Room. The first of those was on Oct. 11, 2001, four days after the United States began bombing Afghanistan. The second was on March 6, 2003, less than two weeks before the US-led invasion of Iraq. The third was last Tuesday, after weeks of bloodshed in Iraq threw the White House into a defensive crouch.

Administration officials said the goal at Tuesday's news conference was to regain control of the national political conversation and to explain to Americans the president's reasons for remaining in Iraq. Whether Bush's performance accomplished that—his supporters called him passionate and unwavering, his critics called him inarticulate and unfocused—the event revealed a lot about the amount of presidential time and planning that goes into what Bush's aides, like all White House aides, call a highly risky hour with a huge potential for mistakes.

"We prepared for a lot of questions that weren't asked," said Dan Bartlett, the White House communications director. For example, he said, Bush had expected to be queried about the rebel anti-American Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The anticipated question, Bartlett said, was, "Was it a mistake not to take out Sadr four months ago?" Bartlett would not say what Bush's answer would have been.

White Houses aides from previous administrations said that Bush's aides clearly would have preferred the safe haven of a speech to the nation, but that they knew how difficult it would have been in an election year to get air time from networks that would have seen a speech as partisan politics.

"If they had gone to the networks and said, 'The president wants to make a speech to the country on Iraq,' they would have said, 'Does he have any news to make?'" said David R. Gergen, who worked in the Nixon, Ford, Reagan and Clinton White Houses. "And they would have said, 'He wants to make sure people understand his reasoning.' And they would have said, 'That's very nice, we'll show it on cable.'"

But a news conference is considered news, and, Gergen said, it is the best way for the president to reach a large prime-time audience, however unpleasant the setting for him. *New York Times*

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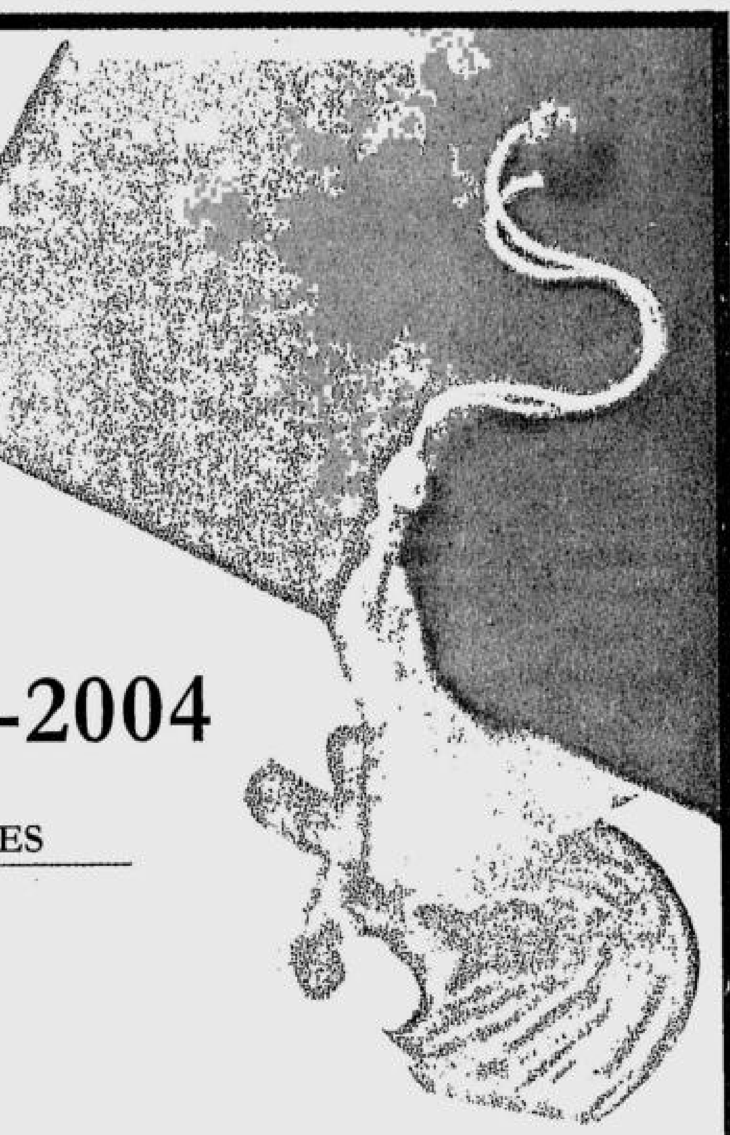

congratulates

THE GRADUATES
OF SCHOOL YEAR 2003-2004

YEAR 2004 COMMENCEMENT RITES

COLLEGE OF COMPUTER STUDIES AND SYSTEMS and the COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
April 20, 2004 • 9 a.m.
Commencement Speaker:
Dr. JAIME GALVEZ-TAN
Former Secretary, Department of Health

GRADUATE SCHOOL, COLLEGE OF LAW, COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY and the COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES-MANILA
April 20, 2004 • 2:30 p.m.
Dr. ALFREDO S. LIM
Former Secretary, Department of Interior and Local Government

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION and the COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION-MANILA (BSBA Business Management Special Degree Program, BSBA Management and BSBA Economics)
April 21, 2004 • 9 a.m.
Hon. ANTONIETA FORTUNA-IBE
Chairperson, Professional Regulation Commission

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES-CALOOCAN, COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS and the COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION-MANILA (BS Accountancy, BSBA Management Accounting, BSBA Banking and Finance, and BSBA Marketing)
April 21, 2004 • 2:30 p.m.
Mrs. MA. ELISA ANSON-ROA
Former Executive Director, Movie Workers Welfare Foundation Inc. (Movelfund)

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION-CALOOCAN
April 22, 2004 • 9 a.m.
Mr. EDUARDO L. FEREIRA
Immediate Past President, Management Association of the Philippines

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY LABORATORY SCHOOLS
April 13, 2004 • 3 p.m.
Atty. SIEGFRED B. MISON
Acting University Legal Counsel, University of the East

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION
April 16, 2004 • 10 a.m.
Dir. YERMA N. SAULON
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Manila District

Commencement Rites will be held at the UE Theater except for the Institute of Technical Education's Special Graduation, which was held at the Conference Hall.

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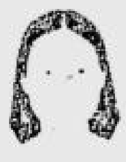
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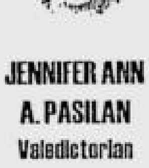
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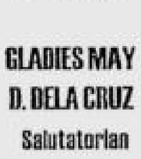
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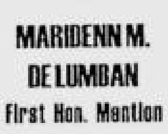
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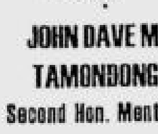
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Intellectuals and losers

EDITORIAL

WILL former Sen. Raul Roco formally withdraw from the presidential race or not? The other day, Emilio Osmeña of Promdi, one of three parties in Roco's Alyansa ng Pag-asa, said that Roco had been declared fit to run for president by his doctors in the United States. Roco's spokesperson Jaime Galvez, a doctor himself, reported that Roco was up and about and in high spirits.

But whether Roco continues to run or not, his presidential bid may have suffered irreparably because of his departure for the United States for treatment at this critical point of the electoral campaign. Even if he is finally given a clean bill of health by his doctors, the doubts about his health—and his physical capability to perform the daunting tasks of the presidency—will persist and affect his standing at the polls.

Many political analysts and observers say that in the current field of presidential candidates, Roco is the most qualified for the presidency. He is a lawyer, a writer, a public speaker and debater, a thinker and doer. He is an intellectual, a person continually engaged in creative and productive activities requiring the use of the intellect.

But the tragedy of Roco—and of the Philippines—is that intellectuals rarely win presidential elections. Even in the United States, which is a more developed and wealthier country, intellectuals almost always lose in elections.

It was not so at the beginning in the United States. There were, among others, Thomas Jefferson, who played a big role in the drafting of the US Constitution; James Madison, who wrote his famous papers on the constitutional convention; James Monroe of the celebrated Monroe Doctrine; Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator; Woodrow Wilson, university professor and president of Princeton; Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who led the United States during the dark days of World War II; and John F. Kennedy, whose promise of a Camelot was cut down by an assassin's bullets.

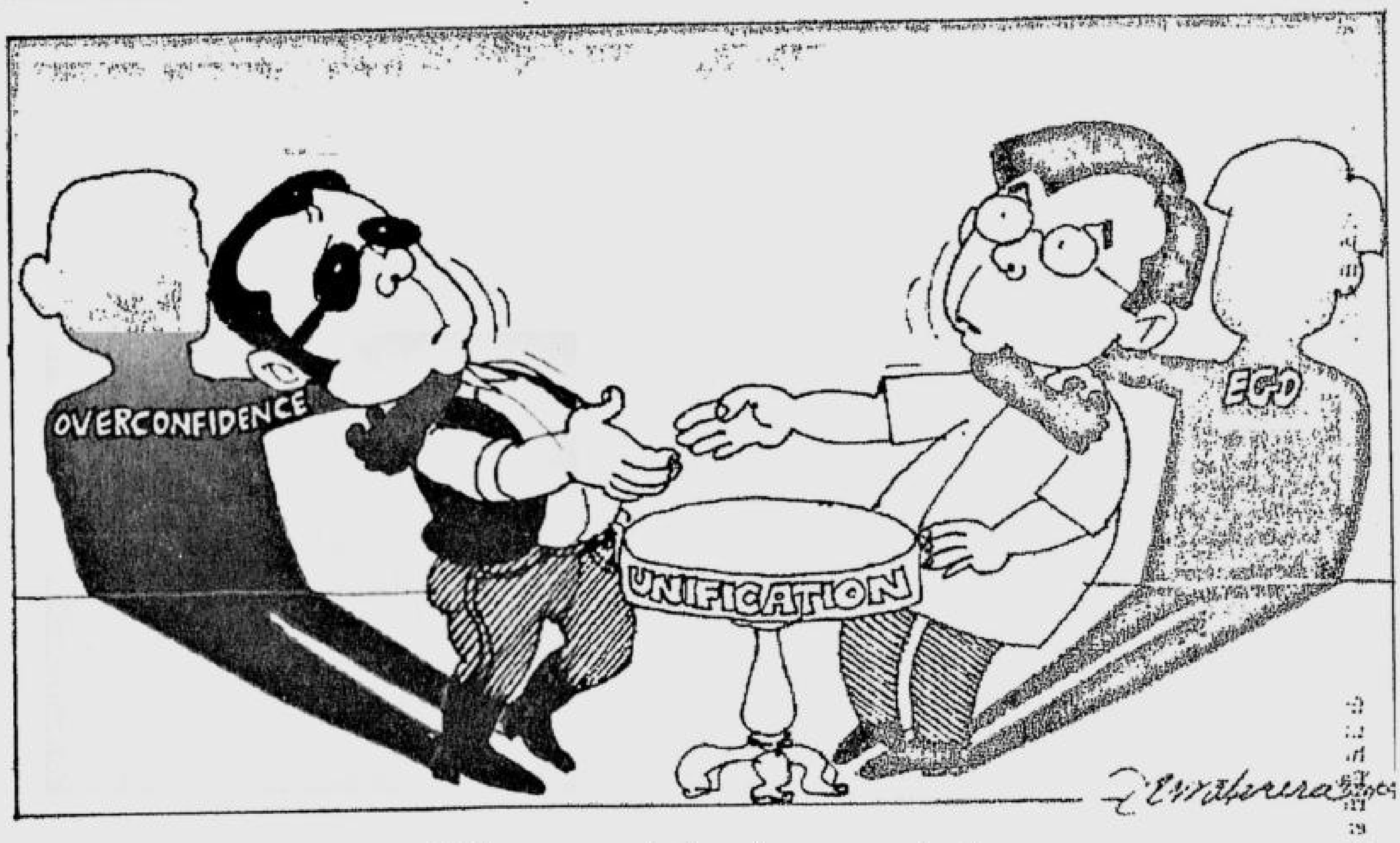
In recent times, two of the notable intellectuals who failed in their bid for the US presidency were Adlai Stevenson and George McGovern. Stevenson ran twice and was defeated both times. But he was widely remembered for having brought a freshness, a depth, passion, wit and vision to American politics and to international diplomatic discourse that illumined an era. Many considered him one of the greatest political orators of his time, second only to Winston Churchill.

At the Democratic National Convention in 1952, Stevenson gave two memorable speeches about which columnist Mary McGrory later wrote: "Politically speaking, it was the Christmas morning of our lives." Stevenson's simple but eloquent prose, coupled with a wit that could wither opponents, defused many a heated controversy. He was passionate about democracy as the most generous form of government, but it was this form of government that denied him the presidency twice.

McGovern has been called "a citizen of the world." He ran twice as Democratic candidate for president and lost both times. With a Ph.D. in history, he taught at his alma mater, Dakota Wesleyan University. In 1972, he ran on a platform of ending the Vietnam War and instituting guaranteed minimum incomes for the nation's poor. A war hero and US congressman for 22 years, McGovern will long be remembered for his courage in speaking out against US involvement in the Vietnam War, his friendship and respect for the common man and his work on behalf of American farmers and hungry children throughout the world.

Here in the Philippines we have many examples of intellectuals, all eminently qualified to become president, who never got elected by popular vote. There were Claro M. Recto, one of the most eloquent and erudite orators who ever graced the hall of the Senate; Lorenzo M. Tañada, the perennial gadfly of the legislature; Jose P. Laurel Sr., nationalist, thinker and orator; Raul S. Manglapus, writer, thinker, orator and debater; and Jovito R. Salonga, lawyer, parliamentarian, orator and moral leader. None of them got elected president although they had the best qualifications for the office.

In the current political environment, if any of their kind runs in a presidential election now or in the future, he or she will be doomed to ignominious defeat. Which will most probably happen to Roco, if he decides to continue running after he is given the go-ahead by his doctors. This is the tragedy of our present-day democracy: there is no room for intellectualism; there is room only for shallow thinking, inane speech, popularity, celebrity and show-biz glamour and glitz.



Pinoy-style 'omerta'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

WILL May 10 see us compelled, by Pinoy-style "omerta," to vote for deaf-mutes?

Campaign jingles are building to a crescendo. But they don't deafen people. Paradoxically, it's the numbing silence on festering issues that does.

"We should condemn the calculated silence of some candidates and compel them to speak their minds," Santo Tomas University urged in a full-page statement.

Is that gagging Pinoy-style "omerta"—a Mafia-rooted but unwritten code that imposes silence?

Candidates are not Trappist monks vowed to silence. "By not addressing the issues, they deprive people of making an intelligent choice," the university says. "Their silence means they are enemies of democracy."

The UST paper does not name Fernando Poe. But many assume he's in the cross hairs. That's understandable. He's always dodged tough issues.

A few weeks before elections, a vacuum of policy persists. FPJ gift-wraps this void with cliches, mostly on his sincerity. "A little sincerity is a dangerous thing," Oscar Wilde writes. "A great deal of it is absolutely fatal."

This dolled-up mental gap has stardust-blinded fans swooning, comedian (a.k.a. "overall campaign manager") Tito Sotto gushes. Along with Dolphy and the Sex Bombs, he believes that "silence is the best substitute for brains ever invented."

FPJ's cordon acts as if Filipinos will settle for paraphrasing George Carlin: "I don't have to tell you, as it goes without saying, there are some things better left unsaid. That speaks for itself. The less said about it the better."

To flourish, democratic governance requires vigorous exchange of ideas. Thus, housewives to business executives fidget over buttoned lips. Sign up for presidential debates, they've urged FPJ. Give us your vision and priorities, if any.

He chickened. "Are we back-pedaling to the era of 'silent movies'… where Poe performs like a star in by-gone wordless films: Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Felix the Cat," this column wondered. (PDI, 9/12/03)

"This zippered lip campaign… is to prevent PR fiascoes," the "Silent Movie Campaign" column noted. "In the process, Poe denies citizens information, they have a right to, on his programs and capabilities…"

Omerta-style gagging afflicts other candidates. "Many crucial issues of our national life have been removed from the agenda of public discussion… like management of foreign debt." INQUIRER's Randy David noted.

Cebu City's yen-loans doubled to over P4.3 billion due to serial devaluation. In unrecognized "omerta," Mayor Tomas Osmeña and city officials play deaf to questions and remain mute on answers.

No one holds the mayor's "feet to the fire with the tougher questions," Sun-Star Cebu observed. "Checks and balances get short shrift in a session hall packed with lapdogs."

Citizens "must hold candidates to their word," the UST statement adds. Don't settle for "the politics of silence and cosmetics," that a Sen. Edgardo Angara and a discredited Joseph Estrada unleashed. Demand accountability. Ask the tough questions.

Ang taong mapagtanong, ay hindi magbabalatong, a Filipino adage says. "The man who often asks questions won't make mistakes."

Government remains mute on the New People's Army fleecing permit-to-campaign fees, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and 40 Catholic bishops, with 28 social action directors, pointed out recently. "We ordinary citizens have to ask some hard questions," they wrote. These include:

If parties other than NPA demanded fees, "would it not be classified under our law as extortion?"

Candidates who refuse to shell out may fail to campaign as widely as is their right. If they lose, "would that be grounds for declaring failure of elections?" But if those who paid won "doesn't that mean control of the election process… by the NPA?"

"Taxation is an act of a sovereign state," the said. In taxing candidates, NPA sets itself u "as a state, with powers of taxation in the territories they control."

Burdened by a failed ideology, the Reds see "belligerency status" -denied them at th Hague negotiations. "Our final question is: Ar they a sovereign state?"

In the provinces, corrupt politicians "wh have access to funds (from) their corrupt practices, are most likely to bow" to NPA demands Catholic leaders cautioned. They may "win i their bid to be elected."

Doesn't this debunk "the NPA's avowed ai to reform Philippine society and do away wit the corruption that's been the bane for so lon of our national life?" they asked.

No response so far from government. Ome ta? The issue is beyond FPJ. Habitual silenc does not mean hidden ability.

These Catholic queries also provide controversial party list candidates—Bayan Mun Gabriela, Anakbayan, Anakpawis, Migran and Suara Bangsa Moro—a chance to disprov the "Red front tag" they claim National Securi Adviser Norberto Gonzales smeared them wit

They seek election. So, they owe it to ci zens to define their position on "revolutiona taxes" and "belligerency status." Clear answe would end lingering suspicions about su servience to an alien creed.

Will citizens again acquiesce to "Pinoy-sty omerta"? If so, we'll deserve what that ghost finger traced, on the walls of King Nebuchanezzar's throne room: *mene, mene, tek parsin*. "You've been weighed on the scales a found wanting."

* * *

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Losers

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I CAUGHT parts of GMA 7's Debate last week. Its topic was whether people should vote for another candidate if their own had little chance to win—at least, as determined by the surveys. I was astonished by some of the arguments there, made in particular by those who thought the answer to that question was yes. Whose *manoks*—GMA and FPJ—of course were enjoying good ratings in the surveys.

One of those, articulated by a GMA supporter, was that the voters owed it to their country to do so. If their candidates had no chance to win, he said, they must vote instead for the next best candidate, the one who was more likely to win. That was Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, he said. He quoted Manuel Quezon who said, "My loyalty to my party ends where my loyalty to my country begins." You could use "candidate" for "party," he said, and the same principle holds. It was imperative, he said, that we give the next president a clear majority so that she could rule the country well.

Well, to begin with, if the fellow had done his homework, he would have known that it wasn't altogether altruism that drove Quezon to say what he did. Bolting his party was the only way Quezon could fight for bicameralism, which was also the only way he could get past the shadow of Sergio Osmeña. So long as the legislature was unicameral, Osmeña would always be the recognized leader. But with a Senate and a House or Representatives, Quezon could become Senate president and challenge Osmeña's leadership from that position of power. Which he did, eventually becoming the new top dog.

In this country more than in any other, the devil himself may quote the Scripture to serve his purposes, the scoundrel herself may quote principle to mount perfidy. Quezon's remark has become the motto of every opportunist, aka "turncoat," in this country, of politicians who switch parties as easily as they do Italian shoes, chief of them GMA who has pretty much traversed the entire alphabet switching from one party to another.

But the comment about voting for the "strong candidate" as an act of patriotism is idiotic. To begin with, the last time I looked the principle was still: "I vote for a candidate, he wins. I do not vote for a candidate, he loses." That principle is tacitly recognized by those who are trying to cajole the voters of other candidates to vote for theirs simply because they are strong. If they are strong, then they do not need the votes of the other voters. If they do need the votes of the other voters, then they are not strong, or as strong only as the other voters vote for them. However you slice it, that's still the rule.

And one that applies exceptionally forcefully in these elections given, as one guest in the show rightly pointed out, the enormous number of undecided. That is the phenomenon in these elections: the closer we get to them the more undecided the voters become—the exact opposite of the trend in past elections as we've known them. If any candidate, including the so-called "weak" ones, can stage a last-ditch rally, he or she could still make it. The huge number of undecided also quite incidentally reflects an alarming public mood, one given to cynicism and despair. The point is to make the undecided decided, the despairing hopeful, the lost found. And the only reasonable proposition there is for them is to vote for the best rather than for the "strongest," the capable rather than the popular. For one who has experience turning things around from bad to good, as Raul Roco has done to the Department of Education, rather than from bad to worse as GMA has done to the country.

There is only one wasted vote to speak of. That is not the one you give to the candidate you think ought to win but doesn't. It is the o you give to the candidate you know should win and does—because of you. You do not vo for a candidate simply so that she or he w win, you vote for a candidate so that the cou try will win. Voting for a candidate is not end in itself, it is merely a means. You wan candidate to win because he or she is good the country, not because she or he is good herself or her friends.

You don't win because you end up on side of the scoundrel who wins. Or who was your money to put up ads and billboards win. You lose. The truly wasted vote was one that went to Erap in 1998, notwithsta ing that he won. The truly wasted vote is one that will go to GMA in 2004, whether wins or not. That is a waste for the coun That is wasting the country.

It is neither patriotism nor pragmatism vote for someone simply because she or h leading, it is suicide. You only pragmatic screw yourself by making someone who ample experience only in lying, cheating stealing win, or continue to rule the coun You only show patriotism in the sense th lemmings show patriotism by throwing th selves off a cliff simply because every oth lemming is doing so. I do not know why want to become a country of lemmings.

And finally, I've said it before and I sa again, when you vote you are not just vot for someone, you are voting for yourself. Y are not just weighing a candidate's chara you are weighing your own. You are not just determining a candidate's merits, you are determining your own. Your vote doesn't just transform the country for good or ill, it transforms you for good or ill. You cannot vote for a candidate you know sucks just because she or he is strong without damaging yourself, or your soul. What patriotism? You can't be true to yourself, you can't be true to your country. You can't be true to yourself, you can't be true to your flag.

You can't be true to yourself, you'll always be a loser.

Unity eludes opposition

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS this column was being written, talk swept the town that FPJ and Panfilo Lacson had forged an agreement scheduled to be announced last night at former President Estrada's 67th birthday party. Accordingly, Lacson had agreed to run as FPJ's vice president, and Sen. Loren Legarda would lead the senatorial ticket. This was said to be among the formulae for opposition unity being pursued, but later yesterday, that scenario didn't materialize.

Reportedly, one reason was that Sen. Edgardo Angara, president of Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, ferociously objected to Legarda's removal from the VP race; in fact the story is that Angara threatened to pull out the entire LDP faction from the KNP if his political disciple were made to step down. Hearing that story, PDI editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc remarked, "*talagang mahal ni Angara si Loren.*" Another observer commented that this story tends to reinforce the theory that Angara is the Palace's "mole" out to torpedo the opposition unity. Others found it hard to believe that Lacson's monstrous ego would allow him yield to FPJ.

The rivals did not show up in Tanay and a new unity meeting had to be reset. But time is ticking for the opposition and if they fail to unite in the next two days, it's goodbye to Malacañang.

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The Manila Times bannered yesterday that the Iglesia ni Cristo had warned the opposition factions it would back up GMA if they failed to unify now. Actually, if the INC followed its adherents' sentiment, it would back up GMA. Earlier the sect announced it would run a series of random surveys on its adherents' preference. Sources say its first internal survey yielded 33 for GMA, FPJ 26, Lacson 20, Roco 17 and undecided 4. For VP, Noli de Castro got 53, Legarda 24, Hermie Aquino 15 and undecided 7. The second INC survey is scheduled on April 26 and the last on May 7.

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Yesterday's write-up on the recent survey among law student volunteers of the Bantay Katarungan from seven leading law schools in Metro Manila was not complete. I reported that on the premise that Raul Roco was already out of the race, the survey showed GMA pulling away with 17 votes versus zero for FPJ. This was deemed remarkable considering that in the first survey conducted a month ago, she was tied at zero with FPJ. The second survey also showed that Loren Legarda has an edge over Noli de Castro in the law students' preference for VP. In the senatorial candidates, the students junked celebrity candidates, such as Jinggoy Estrada and Bong Revilla, and instead chose K-4's Mar Roxas who topped the survey, Alyansa's Perfecto Yasay and independent senatorial candidate Heherson Alvarez.

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The latest Pulse Asia survey showed GMA not only leading FPJ by 3 points, but also neck-and-neck with him in Metro Manila, which has traditionally been opposition. But because about 40 percent of the country's total votes are in Metro Manila, which is in turn part of the Dagupan-to-Lucena corridor that accounts for some 54 percent of the national votes, it's obvious that MM would be the big battleground. I consider it my good fortune to have three of MM's most formidable mayors as my good friends dating back to our post-Ninoy days in the opposition vs. Marcos. Hence, I could discuss the situation with them.

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About two weeks ago, I ran into the durable Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and I asked him how the political situation is in his kingdom, which holds about 5 percent of the MM votes. Binay said he would deliver Makati to FPJ and predicted that MM would go FPJ's way. To make GMA win in MM, Binay asserted, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte would have to work extra hard.

After the *Kapihan sa Maynila* forum yesterday, I sought Atienza for an impromptu briefing on the MM situation and he snorted that Binay cannot deliver Makati to FPJ, as the middle class and many urban poor are disappointed with Binay's reign, he said. Atienza predicts at most a 60-40 outcome in favor of the opposition in Makati. He is predicted to handily win a third term in Manila, and as his PR man, Arman Sebastian, put it, he could really just take a vacation and come back just before the elections. But he's working very hard to make GMA win the majority of the city's 18 percent slice of the MM vote. You have to appreciate the fact, says Atienza, that GMA five months ago was only getting 4 to 6 percent of the MM vote; now she's neck-and-neck with FPJ.

The same is true for Sonny Belmonte in Quezon City which commands 20 percent of all of MM's votes. He's shown in the surveys with 73 percent of QC's vote against 19 percent for his opponent. But he's far from relaxing because he's also working hard for GMA, who's having some problems in QC's second district, its biggest.

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I was with TV directress Lupita Aquino Kashiwahara at a recent gathering and I asked Lupita, who was the first in her field to open for GMA, what the latter's campaign is like and how she sees GMA up close. Lupita goes around with GMA as her "image coach." She says she is just amazed at GMA's incredible stamina—she averages about 15 towns in a day's campaign vs. three for FPJ. That woman, says Lupita, has "enormous discipline of mind and body." Then too, she says, GMA seems to have some kind of laser vision—she can spot people she knows from afar even as she wades into a crowd. What about GMA's famous *taray*? Lupita asserts that is work-oriented: she will unleash her temper if she finds a job not done well. Lupita notes that the President is "results-oriented." Coming into a northern town late at night, GMA went straight into the police station and chatting with the startled personnel, asked them what they needed. A police car. Then she called up someone, Lupita recalls, and the next day, the car was there.

Frontliners in health

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"*BIGYAN kami ng importansya!* (Give us importance!)." That, said Baby Mangulabnan, president of the Pampanga provincial federation of BHWs or barangay health workers, is what they want most from government and the public. Not necessarily higher allowances or more privileges, though that would certainly help, but first recognition of the valuable service they render to the community.

Baby, who is running for councilor in San Fernando, was part of the Legislative Policy Conference on Population, Reproductive Health and Family Planning sponsored by the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD). At least 540 women, most of them BHWs, members of elderly groups, government employees, workers, urban poor, and young people from all over Pampanga took part in the consultation. The whole-day affair consisted of inputs from health and population officials followed by a workshop in which all the stakeholders present articulated their needs, demands and plans on health issues.

At the same time, representatives from party-list groups were also asked to address the body. I was asked to speak on behalf of Abanse! Pinay, the women's party-list group. Rissa Hontiveros Baraquiel spoke for Akbayan, for which she is the third nominee, while Jorge Paterno spoke in behalf of Rep. Leonila Chavez of Butil, a farmers' party.

The lack of knowledge and training, particularly on reproductive health, was a common complaint of the BHWs. But Dr. Enrique Tayag, DOH Region 3 director, said another problem was that sometimes the BHWs are burdened with too many "voluntary" responsibilities, stressing the need for either more rational prioritization of a local government's health concerns, or the creation of a corps of volunteers whose sole focus is the promotion of family planning.

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DR. TAYAG pointed out to me the difficulty of making accurate and appropriate plans and programs at the local level while health data have yet to be disaggregated. "It is difficult to make plans even at the regional level if we're going to base these on national data that are already outdated by the time they're released," he said.

To illustrate, Tayag pointed out the situation in Central Luzon, where the most popular method of family planning is tubal ligation (while pills are the most popular nationwide). When I asked why the women in the region prefer a surgical permanent method, Tayag confessed he could not give an exact answer, though he conceded that perhaps a good network of clinics could explain this preference. This simply illustrates, he said, the folly of basing local health programs on national data when local circumstances, and women's needs and preferences, may call for other approaches.

Could lack of family planning supplies, specifically pills, also account for this preference? The BHWs said they often felt frustrated about referring their neighbors to the health centers or rural health units only to have the neighbors come back to them complaining because the health personnel said there were no commodities available.

While at the consultation, held at the refurbished Paskuhan Village, now called the "WOW Hilaga" trade and tourism center for Northern Luzon, I met again with Susan Pineda, a women's advocate who is running for councilor in Angeles City. The other party, she complained, has put up another "Susan Pineda" to jeopardize her chances, which is why she has been driven to stress her middle initial before Angeles voters. "I am Susan T. Pineda, T for *totoo* (true)," she says, "while the other one is Susan M. Pineda, M for *mali* (wrong)."

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PHARMACISTS aren't usually thought of as "frontliners" in health, but in the case of the fight against TB, they often serve as sources of information, diagnosis and even treatment for people with TB, often without their realizing it.

A person who's been coughing continuously for two weeks or more may already be suspected of having TB, but in the Philippines, studies have found that one of every four persons with TB goes not to a doctor for a consultation but to a drugstore to buy medicines to get rid of the "cough."

Self-medication is a dangerous practice, authorities say. It can result in incomplete and harmful drug use, treatment failure and public health complications. A self-medicating person with TB is more likely to develop drug-resistant TB, which is more difficult to treat and requires more expensive drugs.

This is why PhilTIPS (Philippine Tuberculosis Initiatives for the Private Sector) recently launched its Pharmacy DOTS Initiative or PDI, to harness pharmacists and the drug store industry to actively promote DOTS, an internationally recognized effective treatment course for TB.

Last Saturday, during the annual convention of the Philippine Pharmaceutical Association (PPhA) in Iloilo, the pharmacists' group and the Drugstores Association of the Philippines signed a declaration of support for PDI, in the presence of DOH regional directors, PhilTIPS officials, a representative of PhilCAT (Philippine Coalition against TB), and the US Agency for International Development.

PDI will be piloted in seven cities around the country, offering training workshops for pharmacists to provide them the necessary information and skills to promote correct and complete TB treatment, including recognizing customers who may be candidates for TB DOTS treatment.

While TB today kills 75 Filipinos every day, the good news is that through the adoption of the DOTS protocol, it's estimated that 168 TB patients are cured every day. With drugstores and pharmacists signing in, the number of successful TB cures can only go higher.

Disasters

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

ANYONE who has lived in this country long enough is aware that every year presents its regular set of disasters (not the least of them our politicians, perennial and immutable as death and taxes, except that death doesn't get worse every year, according to my friend Ding).

There are the usual typhoons followed by the never-ending floods, the brownouts after a bolt of lightning (many times even without), the landslides in hills and mountains with the resulting loss of lives, the recurring lack of water during summer, the degradation of rivers, etc. We have become used to litanies of woes.

During the colonial years, our ancestor's somehow went through the same travails. I wouldn't be the least surprised if our DNA makeup contains a gene that makes us smile even when the roof is caving in on us, which is perhaps why foreigners are mystified to see that despite all our problems we're still dancing and singing.

But anyway, here are accounts about the Philippines in mid-17th century. After having overcome dangers in one of its voyages, the galleon S. Francisco Javier, whose commander was General Ugalde, with Esteban Ramos as pilot, had laid anchor in the port of Borongan, Samar. All of a sudden a strong storm came along and, with the force of the waves, dragged the vessel off its anchors despite its strong cables. The precautions taken to keep her safe proved useless. The ship broke apart against a shoal within sight from the port. Although the passengers were saved, its cargoes, including silver, were lost.

The damage wouldn't have been so devastating if two other galleons, the Victoria and the Santiago, hadn't been shipwrecked on their way to Acapulco. Due to these catastrophes, followed by a plague of locusts that ruined crops, famine stalked the land in 1656. As though these were not enough misfortunes, an epidemic of small pox struck, killing both adults and children in unprecedented numbers.

Just about this time Salicala of Mindanao embarked on a mission of harassing the islands through raids and other mischiefs, instilling such terror that upon the sight of Moslem armadas, whole villages would disperse to the jungles to live like nomads. Salicala would take off with captives and since there was no one to rescue them, they were condemned to live as slaves.

To top this accumulation of horrors, another natural disaster struck on Aug. 20, 1658—an earthquake more violent, although of shorter duration, than the one that hit during the feast of San Andres. Mercifully, it occurred in the afternoon so that there were fewer victims, and since many of the structures were of wood, the damage wasn't as serious as the previous tremor.

But still, all over, convents, houses and churches were affected. The Church of the Recollects collapsed and the dome of Sta. Clara cracked and had to be demolished to prevent further disasters. The convent of Sto. Domingo and the archbishop's palace fell apart. But as has been said, some good always comes out of disasters and from that time on buildings had to be constructed with *harigues* of wood.

In the days of mourning and desolation that followed, envoys from neighboring kingdoms arrived with intentions of renewing old ties and establishing commercial relations. The kings of Macasar, Siam and Cambodia sent their ambassadors offering their free ports. The governor received them with much pomp, gave them gifts and they left ostensibly satisfied. These visits were reciprocated and good relations were assured.

A Japanese delegation that arrived in the port of Cavite was so impressed with the welcome given its members, many of them opted to remain in Manila with their countrymen who had been converted to Christianity and had then already established their homes in the barrio of San Anton.

Having survived a horrendous decade, everyone thought things would improve. But the galleon Concepcion, leaving the port of Lampon for Acapulco in 1660 under Gen. Esteban Ramos (who didn't seem to have much luck), met a strong typhoon which caused its rigging to collapse. The ship had to return to Cavite. Manila went into crisis. The treasury was bankrupt (does this sound familiar?) and there was a shortage of manpower—more than 500 men had perished in various shipwrecks.

A lot of money was owed the province of Pampanga, the source of lumber used for the construction of galleons. In the mountains of Malasingbo and Boso-Boso, the cutting of lumber was supervised by Juan Cortaberria. There were over a thousand *Kapampangans* involved in the construction of this particular vessel. The project was urgent due to the previous losses but the lumber was insufficient. Due to shipwrecks, the treasury had no funds to pay Spaniards or natives and tempers must have run high. Pressure on the supervisors were such that they began to deal violently with the laborers. In the meantime, people could hardly pay their taxes. At that point their patience wore thin and in 1669 they revolted.

(*Various sources; Blair & Robertson.*)

Take two

YOUNG BLOOD

Karl Aries Emerson F. Cabilao

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IT was inevitable. After failing to find my name on the list of successful examinees in last year's June architecture board examinations, I knew that I had to relive a long and tedious episode of my life. It meant wading again through the numerous review materials, postponing projects and, worse, spending another huge amount of cash traveling to Manila with my books, T-square and drawing board to give it another try.

I suppose this is what makes our profession's licensure examinations different from other exams. Aside from the crucial 10 to 12-hour Design examination, the only venue for the examinations that our modern imperialists seem to think of is Manila. Last year a petition was passed around seeking to have the exams held in Cebu, but the Professional Regulatory Commission turned it down probably because the idea got very little support from the architectural schools in our Visayan city. For graduates from the Visayas like me, taking the exams in Manila was like playing a championship game in a rival's home court.

This time around, three friends and I decided to stay in the same hotel but we departed from Cebu only two days before the first day of exams. During our first try, we had stayed in Manila for nine days and only one in our small group passed. Now the temptation to make the rounds of Greenbelt and Rockwell was a little bit easier to resist.

Since all four of us were taking the test for the second time, we tried to calm our nerves by exchanging and reminiscing about our college days. We tried very hard not to think about having a "take three."

After spending the last few days before the exams "studying" and visiting churches, the exams finally began. During the first two days, the exams were held in an old, dilapidated school in Quiapo that was reeking of garbage from the surrounding slum areas. The road outside was always wet with stinking water from a canal that overflowed. Had I known days earlier that we would be assigned to that school, I would have hired someone to burn it down.

I guess it was part of the mind games that the examiners were playing on us, aside from the fact that the exams were really hard, tricky and bizarre as usual.

Day 3 brought me to a Quezon City school, far from our hotel. The environment there was definitely better than in the school in Quiapo. But for 10 tension-filled hours, I worked on the drafting board, without taking breakfast or lunch. Only one small bottle of mineral water saved me from collapse before I finished. But I was too engrossed trying to come up with a design that would somehow touch the stone-cold hearts of the examiners to notice how hungry I was.

We flew back to Cebu the very next day after taking the last exam. Our five-day stay in Manila seemed to have lasted a month.

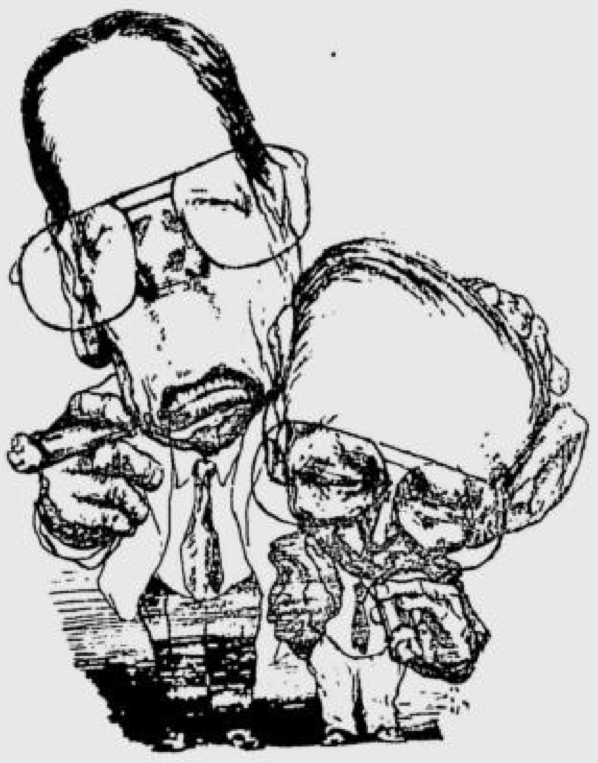
Back in Cebu, aside from saying a million prayers, I had to find things to do to keep myself from worrying too much about the exams. I went back to work, which didn't totally take my mind away from architecture. But at least I was being useful.

Days later a friend sent a text message that looked surreal to me. It took a while before I could bring myself to open the computer and check the list of successful examinees. And there it was making things official: After spending five years in college, another two reviewing and working, and eating dust in June, I was a licensed architect.

I couldn't help it, but I had to go back to the polluted and traffic-gridlocked Manila, though this time, minus the books, the T-square and the drawing board. And I would not have to return to that old, dilapidated school in Quiapo. I was going to a five-star hotel by the bay to take my oath as a professional.

Karl Aries Emerson F. Cabilao, 24, took and passed the January 2004 Architects Licensure Examinations. He also writes for the youth section of a Cebu daily.

IN THE NEWS



Sen. John Osmeña and Fidel V. Ramos

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Unity eludes opposition

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Reportedly, one reason was that Sen. Edgardo Angara, president of Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, ferociously objected to Legarda's removal from the VP race; in fact the story is that Angara threatened to pull out the entire LDP faction from the KNP if his political disciple were made to step down. Hearing that story, PDI editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc remarked, "*talagang mahal ni Angara si Loren.*" Another observer commented that this story tends to reinforce the theory that Angara is the Palace's "mole" out to torpedo the opposition unity. Others found it hard to believe that Lacson's monstrous ego would allow him yield to FPJ.

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Frontliners in health

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

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SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

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The damage wouldn't have been so devastating if two other galleons, the Victoria and the Santiago, hadn't been shipwrecked on their way to Acapulco. Due to these catastrophes, followed by a plague of locusts that ruined crops, famine stalked the land in 1656. As though these were not enough misfortunes, an epidemic of small pox struck, killing both adults and children in unprecedented numbers.

Just about this time Salicala of Mindanao embarked on a mission of harassing the islands through raids and other mischiefs, instilling such terror that upon the sight of Moslem armadas, whole villages would disperse to the jungles to live like nomads. Salicala would take off with captives and since there was no one to rescue them, they were condemned to live as slaves.

To top this accumulation of horrors, another natural disaster struck on Aug. 20, 1658—an earthquake more violent, although of shorter duration, than the one that hit during the feast of San Andres. Mercifully, it occurred in the afternoon so that there were fewer victims, and since many of the structures were of wood, the damage wasn't as serious as the previous tremor.

But still, all over, convents, houses and churches were affected. The Church of the Recollects collapsed and the dome of Sta. Clara cracked and had to be demolished to prevent further disasters. The convent of Sto. Domingo and the archbishop's palace fell apart. But as has been said, some good always comes out of disasters and from that time on buildings had to be constructed with *harigues* of wood.

In the days of mourning and desolation that followed, envoys from neighboring kingdoms arrived with intentions of renewing old ties and establishing commercial relations. The kings of Macasar, Siam and Cambodia sent their ambassadors offering their free ports. The governor received them with much pomp, gave them gifts and they left ostensibly satisfied. These visits were reciprocated and good relations were assured.

A Japanese delegation that arrived in the port of Cavite was so impressed with the welcome given its members, many of them opted to remain in Manila with their countrymen who had been converted to Christianity and had then already established their homes in the barrio of San Anton.

Having survived a horrendous decade, everyone thought things would improve. But the galleon Concepcion, leaving the port of Lampon for Acapulco in 1660 under Gen. Esteban Ramos (who didn't seem to have much luck), met a strong typhoon which caused its rigging to collapse. The ship had to return to Cavite. Manila went into crisis. The treasury was bankrupt (does this sound familiar?) and there was a shortage of manpower—more than 500 men had perished in various shipwrecks.

A lot of money was owed the province of Pampanga, the source of lumber used for the construction of galleons. In the mountains of Malasingbo and Boso-Boso, the cutting of lumber was supervised by Juan Cortaberria. There were over a thousand *Kapampangans* involved in the construction of this particular vessel. The project was urgent due to the previous losses but the lumber was insufficient. Due to shipwrecks, the treasury had no funds to pay Spaniards or natives and tempers must have run high. Pressure on the supervisors were such that they began to deal violently with the laborers. In the meantime, people could hardly pay their taxes. At that point their patience wore thin and in 1669 they revolted.

(*Various sources; Blair & Robertson.*)

Take two

IT was inevitable. After failing to find my name on the list of successful examinees in last year's June architecture board examinations, I knew that I had to relive a long and tedious episode of my life. It meant wading again through the numerous review materials, postponing projects and, worse, spending another huge amount of cash traveling to Manila with my books, T-square and drawing board to give it another try.

YOUNG BLOOD

Karl Aries Emerson F. Cabilao

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I suppose this is what makes our profession's licensure examinations different from other exams. Aside from the crucial 10 to 12-hour Design examination, the only venue for the examinations that our modern imperialists seem to think of is Manila. Last year a petition was passed around seeking to have the exams held in Cebu, but the Professional Regulatory Commission turned it down probably because the idea got very little support from the architectural schools in our Visayan city. For graduates from the Visayas like me, taking the exams in Manila was like playing a championship game in a rival's home court.

This time around, three friends and I decided to stay in the same hotel but we departed from Cebu only two days before the first day of exams. During our first try, we had stayed in Manila for nine days and only one in our small group passed. Now the temptation to make the rounds of Greenbelt and Rockwell was a little bit easier to resist.

Since all four of us were taking the test for the second time, we tried to calm our nerves by exchanging and reminiscing about our college days. We tried very hard not to think about having a "take three."

After spending the last few days before the exams "studying" and visiting churches, the exams finally began. During the first two days, the exams were held in an old, dilapidated school in Quiapo that was reeking of garbage from the surrounding slum areas. The road outside was always wet with stinking water from a canal that overflowed. Had I known days earlier that we would be assigned to that school, I would have hired someone to burn it down.

I guess it was part of the mind games that the examiners were playing on us, aside from the fact that the exams were really hard, tricky and bizarre as usual.

Day 3 brought me to a Quezon City school, far from our hotel. The environment there was definitely better than in the school in Quiapo. But for 10 tension-filled hours, I worked on the drafting board, without taking breakfast or lunch. Only one small bottle of mineral water saved me from collapse before I finished. But I was too engrossed trying to come up with a design that would somehow touch the stone-cold hearts of the examiners to notice how hungry I was.

We flew back to Cebu the very next day after taking the last exam. Our five-day stay in Manila seemed to have lasted a month.

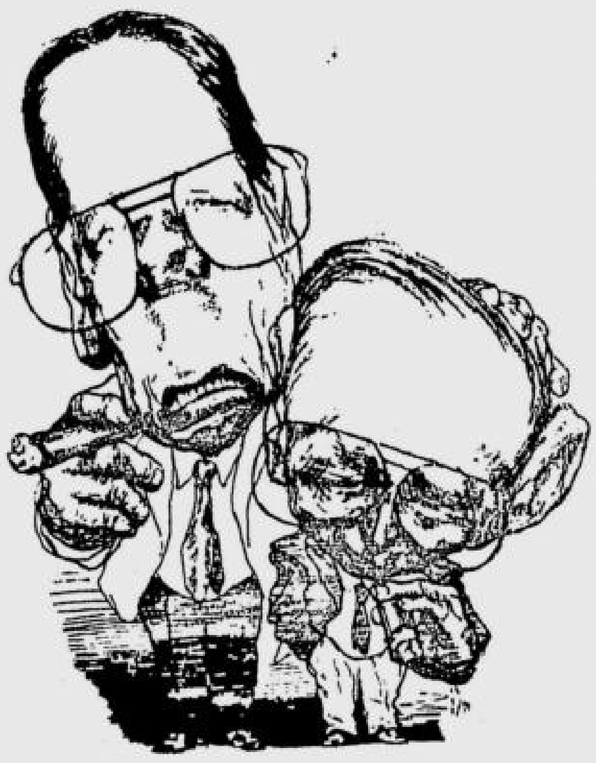
Back in Cebu, aside from saying a million prayers, I had to find things to do to keep myself from worrying too much about the exams. I went back to work, which didn't totally take my mind away from architecture. But at least I was being useful.

Days later a friend sent a text message that looked surreal to me. It took a while before I could bring myself to open the computer and check the list of successful examinees. And there it was making things official: After spending five years in college, another two reviewing and working, and eating dust in June, I was a licensed architect.

I couldn't help it, but I had to go back to the polluted and traffic-gridlocked Manila, though this time, minus the books, the T-square and the drawing board. And I would not have to return to that old, dilapidated school in Quiapo. I was going to a five-star hotel by the bay to take my oath as a professional.

Karl Aries Emerson F. Cabilao, 24, took and passed the January 2004 Architects Licensure Examinations. He also writes for the youth section of a Cebu daily.

IN THE NEWS



Sen. John Osmeña and Fidel V. Ramos

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Democracy in the Philippines?

WHEN my father, the late Dr. Salvador Araneta, ran for delegate of the 1971 Constitutional Convention, he had a platform which called for 64 constitutional reforms. Printed and distributed during the campaign, they were later published in two books: the "Bayanikasan Constitution" in 1976, and "Effective Democracy for All" in 1991. His proposals were based on studies, one conducted by him and the other by Philconsa.

Araneta made it clear that "democracy is a mirage without clean elections"; when there is the intervention of gold, guns and goons, which he noted was growing in intensity and had to be stopped.

Araneta and Philconsa recognized the urgent need for an independent and incorrupt judiciary. "Our judiciary," he said, "is no longer the incorrupt judiciary of our pre-war era, because the appointments made by the presidents in later years have been motivated by political consideration."

Araneta thus proposed the establishment of a high tribunal, co-equal and as prestigious as the Supreme Court, not subordinate to the legislative and executive powers, free from politics, composed of distinguished Filipinos. The Supreme Court and the courts under it would continue exercising jurisdiction over civil cases, but not violations of election laws, over which it would be the new tribunal which would have jurisdiction. The new tribunal would also be the one to handle impeachment proceedings, and other cases involving public officials and electoral crimes.

Another proposal was the reduction of presidential powers. The president would be divested of his power to appoint members of the judiciary, auditor general, members of the Commission on Elections and Civil Service Commission. The president would no longer have the power to suspend and dismiss officials of local governments.

Incidentally, Dr. Araneta was also a delegate to the 1933 Constitutional Convention. There, he argued against giving the president, as part of his military powers, the right to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. He wanted to entrust this power to the National Assembly, with the president exercising the same only when body was not in session; and provided he got the consent of the majority of the Supreme Court members.

In the same convention, Dr. Araneta also proposed that the suspension would be considered revoked if the president did not call a special session of the National Assembly within 15 days from the date the suspension was issued or if the National Assembly failed to confirm the action of the president within 30 days. He feared that without this amendment, arrests would be arbitrary, and a president would unjustly declare martial law. What he feared came to pass with Marcos.

I urge all citizens to heed the call of Dr. Araneta for reforms.

—MA. LINA A. SANTIAGO,
Makati City

Strict standards for bridge designs

IN CONNECTION with the article titled "Safety of 50 bridges checked" (PDI, 3/15/04), according to Director Danilo Manalang of the Bureau of Design, Department of Public Works and Higways, DPWH bridges are designed following internationally accepted principles and methodology. Specifically, the bridges are built in accordance with the modern seismic design to meet the requirements under the "Standard Specifications for Highway Bridges of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials" which have been made mandatory as well in the Philippines by Department Order No. 75 Series of 1992.

In the case of La Huerta Bridge in Parañaque City, Sevilla Bridge in Mandaluyong City and Tullahan Bridge in Valenzuela, Director Manalang says that these bridges were designed by DPWH consultants following standard DPWH design requirements and specifications. Bridge projects that cost more than P30 million are submitted to the BOD for review and approval.

Regarding the Japanese-funded Metropolitan Manila Earthquake Impact Reduction Study (MMEIRS), Director Manalang says the DPWH does not have a copy of the report at this time. However, the public is assured that the DPWH will consider the recommendations in the report.

—JENNIFER D. PUNZALAN, OIC-Public
Information Division, Department of
Public Works and Highways

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Ms Noli de Castro no longer with ABS-CBN

THE FRONT-PAGE article, "Loren-Noli election fight gets personal," written by Carlito Pablo and Mei Magsino last March 30, stated that Arlene Sinsuat, the wife of Sen. Noli de Castro, "is a ranking executive at ABS-CBN, the television network that nurtured the broadcast careers of both De Castro and Legarda."

We would like to clarify that Arlene Sinsuat de Castro has retired from ABS-CBN.

Your reporter, Marinel Cruz, made an effort to call up our public relations director, Leah Salterio, on Monday night to verify if Ms De Castro was still the ABS-CBN vice president for current affairs. Salterio gave Cruz the information she needed. However, the front-page article that came out reported that Ms De Castro "is still an ABS-CBN executive," which is erroneous.

—MALOLI ESPINOSA-MANALASTAS,
vice president, government, corporate affairs
and public relations, ABS-CBN Broadcasting
Corp., Sgt. EA Esguerra Ave. cor. Mother
Ignacia Street, Quezon City

Marinel Cruz said she told an editor about the correction but apparently, in the rush to beat the deadline, the correct version did not make it to the final copy. —Ed.

In search of Filipino World War II heroes

I AM a writer currently researching for a book on the April 1943 escape from the Davao Penal Colony of 10 American prisoners of war and two Filipino convicts. This legendary escape alerted the world to the story of the Bataan Death March and atrocities committed by the Japanese in the occupied Philippines during World War II. The outrage created by the prisoners' revelations helped galvanize the Allied war effort toward an increased prosecution of the Pacific War and helped General Douglas MacArthur in his push to return to and liberate the Philippines. The book will be published by Simon & Schuster in 2005.

I am seeking help in locating the main Filipino characters of this narrative—Benigno dela Cruz, Victor Jumarong, Candido "Pop" Abrina and Juan Acenas.

Dela Cruz and Jumarong risked their lives to help effect the escape and guided the escapees through the swamp that encompassed the penal colony. In gratitude, the American POWs, upon returning to the United States, successfully petitioned President Manuel Quezon for pardons for Dela Cruz and Jumarong.

All four Filipinos played an integral role in this legendary tale, but I need help to tell their story. Any information that anyone might have that would lead to locating these men and/or their surviving families would be greatly appreciated.

If anyone has any information or knows of anyone who might have information about them, please step forward and contact me. I can be reached by collect call: 1 (724) 327-7023 or e-mail: JLUKACS1@aol.com.

Thanks for your time and help!

—JOHN D. LUKACS,
6142 Old William Penn Highway,
Export, Pennsylvania, USA

Be heroes and heroines

ON MAY 10, let us all become genuine heroes and heroines by voting wisely and not selling our votes. For indeed there is a hero in you and, yes, in every one of us.

Elections are certainly the most important democratic exercise we, Filipinos, perform in our lifetime.

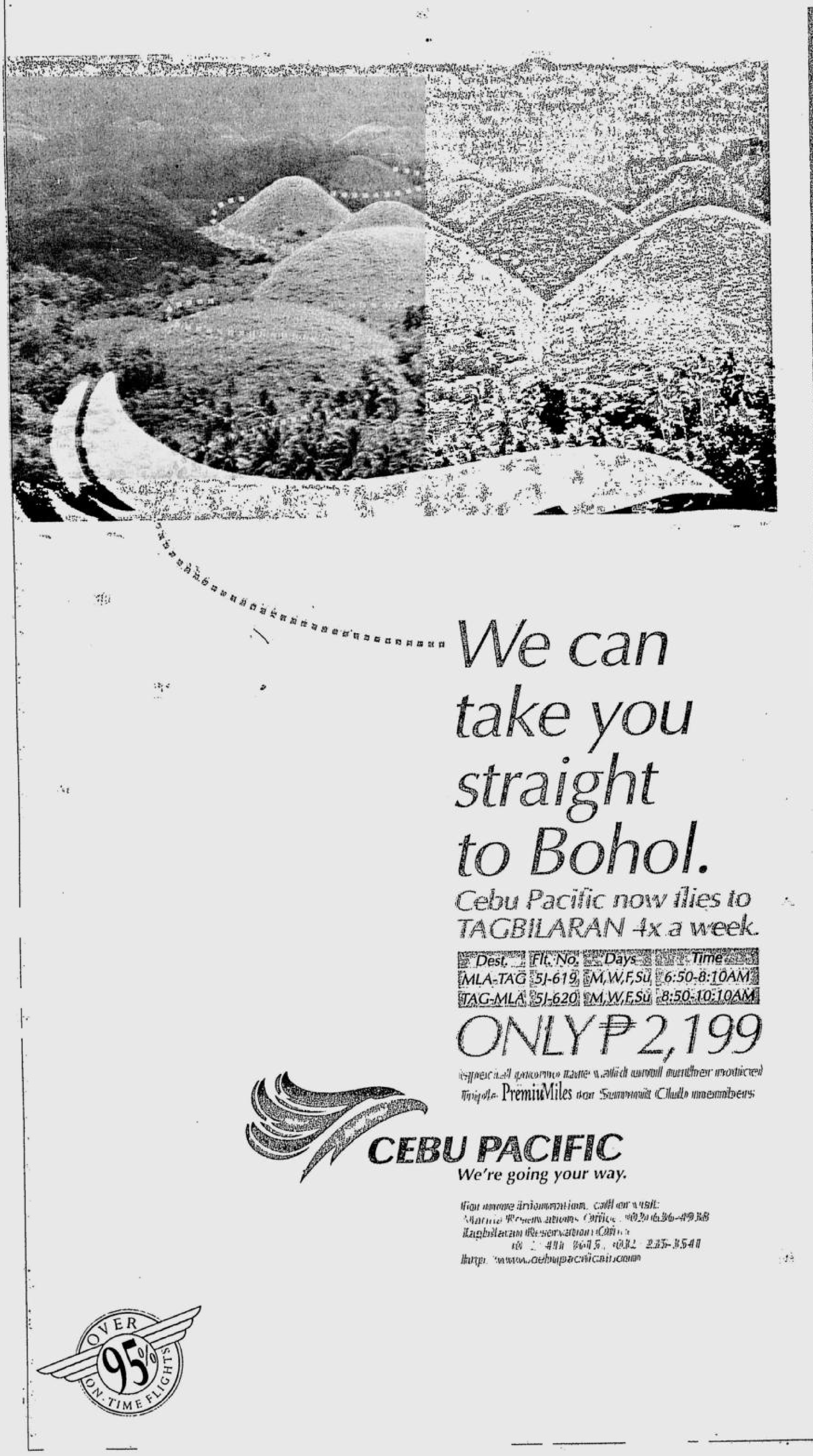
The future of our country and our people, particularly the young and the poor, will depend on the results of credible, peaceful and honest elections.

In past elections, we elected the wrong people, including one to the most important position in the land. Let us not commit the same mistake this time.

Let us vote for a president who is not a liar, not corruptible and not incompetent; who does not use government offices and funds or drug and gambling money for election campaign purposes. Let us not vote for candidates who are selling themselves to the devil to win the election. Yes, let us only vote for a president who can bring back the Philippines to the right path.

As a people, we have suffered enough. On May 10 let us end our suffering by voting only for deserving candidates.

—OSCAR R. LANDICHO, 2 Goodenia Court,
Voyager Point, NSW, Australia



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Sarangani FPJ backers go to Gloria

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Supporters of KNP presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. in Alabel town in Sarangani province have defected to President Macapagal Arroyo's camp.

Nestor Camacho, chair of the 5,000-strong FPJ for President Movement (FPJPM) Alabel chapter, on Saturday told reporters that they defected after realizing that the actor was not qualified and not competent to cope with the rigors and pressures of the presidency.

They declared their withdrawal of support during a simple ceremony held at Purok 9, Alabel poblacion Saturday.

The affair was highlighted by the tearing down of streamers and the burning of FPJ posters by the FPJPM officials and members.

FPJ streamers were replaced with Bigkis Pinoy and President Macapagal's posters.

The Bigkis Pinoy streamers and posters showed Ms Macapagal and her running mate, TV personality Noli de Castro.

Camacho urged other voters not to entrust the future of the country to what he described as an inexperienced and incompetent candidate like Poe Jr.

He said among the the presidential candidates, Ms Macapagal was the most experienced and qualified.

He further said the President must be given another six-year term so there would be continuity of government programs and projects.

The defections came in the wake of efforts from both camps to woo supporters to their sides.

In Negros Occidental, reports said local officials are divided between Poe and Ms Macapagal.

But Rep. Julio Ledesma and four other provincial board members vowed to continue to support Ms Macapagal despite the decision of some provincial officials to support the opposition.

Ms Macapagal was one of the sponsors at the wedding between Ledesma and actress Assunta de Rossi.

The board members who are supporting Ms Macapagal are Angelito Colmenares (fifth district), Corazon Diploma (second) and Reynaldo Depasucat and Mardi Mapa Suplido (third).

Colmenares said that he respected Gov. Joseph Maranon's decision to go for Poe but he noted that it was a personal decision and not the stand of the party.

"I am committed to the governor, but will continue to support the presidential bid of Ms Macapagal-Arroyo, along with five other mayors of the fifth district," he said.

"I will stand on my commitment to the President, I have been campaigning for her and cannot shift support midstream," he said. ***Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau with a report from Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Bet for Baguio mayor tries new tack in campaign vs 'rich, famous' rivals

By Delmar Carino
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Ranged against opponents whom he calls "rich and famous," an independent mayoral candidate here has embarked on a unique way of campaigning.

Felipe Tribunalo Ramos of 27 Dagohoy St. in Barangay Kagitingan here parks his dilapidated car on major roads of the city and leave it there for all voters to read his two streamers—"Ramos for Mayor."

The brown Mitsubishi Galant with Plate No. ABU-714 is only Ramos' visible campaign material.

True, he has printed 20,000 leaflets courtesy of friends who lent him money. But the same would pale to his rivals' big streamers and billboards spread all over the city's 129 barangays.

In fact, Ramos, 68, has no cellphone. He, too, campaigns alone and refuses to go on an intensive house-to-house sortie.

It is the car, bought last year for P36,000, that is left to do the campaigning for him. It has two loudspeakers on top. The "Ramos for Mayor" streamers drape its front hood and back windshield.

Ramos, a native of Toledo City in Cebu, literally parks the car on the road and leaves it there, without any campaign jingle coming from loud speakers, a driver, a supporter or Ramos himself.

After a day or two, the car will be moved to another parking area, mostly near road intersections.

Once, the car was seen near the bridge fronting Teachers' Camp. Then it was moved along Carino Street.

Next, the car was parked near the Justice Hall and as of this writing, it was seen near a waiting shed near UP Baguio.

Ramos admitted he gets his car at four in the morning and drives it to look for a new parking area.

"I have transferred the car 28 times since March 26," Ramos, a goldsmith who claims he finished political science at the BCF University here, told the INQUIRER.

"That's really my strategy so that I will get noticed since my opponents are all rich," he said.

"I even parked it near the Supreme Court compound," he said.

Ramos, who lives with wife Teodora in a small room in the crowded ground floor of the former Garden Theater on Dagohoy Street, said his car is his only way of fighting the "giants" of local politics here.

Lawyer Julius Torres, Baguio-Benguet head of the Commission on Elections, said Ramos' campaign approach is legal. "But if it is placed in a no parking zone, it's the problem of the traffic policemen," he said.

Ramos is up against reelectionist Mayor Bernardo Vergara (NPC-Lakas), Edgar Avila (PMP-LP Coalition for Baguio), Richard Carino (Aksyon Demokratiko) and Braulio Yaranon (LDP).

SORSOGON CITY HALL RENY PAMPOLINA, MALACANANG PHOTO
President Macapagal drops by the site of the new city hall of Sorsogon to lead groundbreaking rites for the new structure. The President made the side trip from a sortie in Borongan and Allen in Samar.

2 killed, 4 missing as pirates attack boat

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Two fishermen were killed while their four other companions were missing when their fishing vessel was attacked by suspected sea pirates over the weekend.

One of the two fatalities was identified as a Lucresio Generalao, a resident of this city. The other slain victim remains unidentified as of late yesterday afternoon.

Lita Silvero, younger sister of Generalao, told reporters that the fishing vessel MV James Bond owned by the Generalao family was found by other fishermen drifting in the high seas without its crewmen.

When the vessel was checked, it yielded the bodies of the slain fishermen.

The vessel's engine and other personal belongings of the crew were also missing.

Local authorities said the vessel and its crew came under attack by sea pirates. ***Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Tribal people in Southern Luzon learn election lessons, to take more intelligent look at bets

CALAPAN CITY—The Mangyans appreciate their right to vote as Filipinos and so majority of them are participating in the elections, said leaders of the province-wide Kapulungan para sa Lupaing Ninuno (KPLN).

This was confirmed by National Commission on Indigenous People Commissioner Lagtum Pasag, who said about 70-80 percent of Mangyan voters will participate in the elections as voters and candidates.

KPLN coordinator Ponyong Kaldos said the Mangyans in Bulalacao town, numbering 5,000 (out of about 11,000 total population), could make a candidate win if they cast a solid vote.

The Mangyans have attended the voters' education program through church workers.

Lessons learned

Mangyan leaders who were interviewed by the INQUIRER said they would vote for a candidate who has an indigenous people agenda and track record.

Among the Iraya in Puerto Galera, where there are about 4,000 families, the youth will be more involved.

Among the Alangan in Naujan, where more than 5,000 families comprise five barangays, the voters will look into who have helped them get their certificate of ancestral domain title.

Politicians have been courting their votes but the leaders said they know who among the aspirants truly respect their culture and rights.

Vote-buying

Still, vote-buying persists. Voters had been offered P100 each but the people have learned their lessons.

According to Bernabe Lintawagin of Paitan, a politician once gave P20,000 to a leader to win in their place.

"For the Mangyan, what is important is the future, so that candidate lost," he said.

Among the distant Bangon, Fernando Poe Jr. is not familiar. There are about 1,000 families there.

About 700 Tadyawan voters are in Victoria town.

The Buhid in Bongabong now asks politicians for conditions that benefit them.

The fight in this town is among President Macapagal-Arroyo for her programs extended to Mindoro, Poe for his mass appeal, Roco for free education achieved while he was senator, and Lacson, who carries De Castro, a native of Mindoro, for his vice president.

Many politicians have taken advantage of some Mangyans who are illiterate.

In Roxas town, the Mangyan have experienced being locked up in a place and fed until voting time when teachers themselves wrote for them.

NDF says campaign fees won't stall polls

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The National Democratic Front (NDF) in Mindanao allayed fears of Catholic bishops and the National Secretariat for Social Action, Justice and Peace of a possible failure of elections because of its collection of permit-to-campaign (PTC) fees.

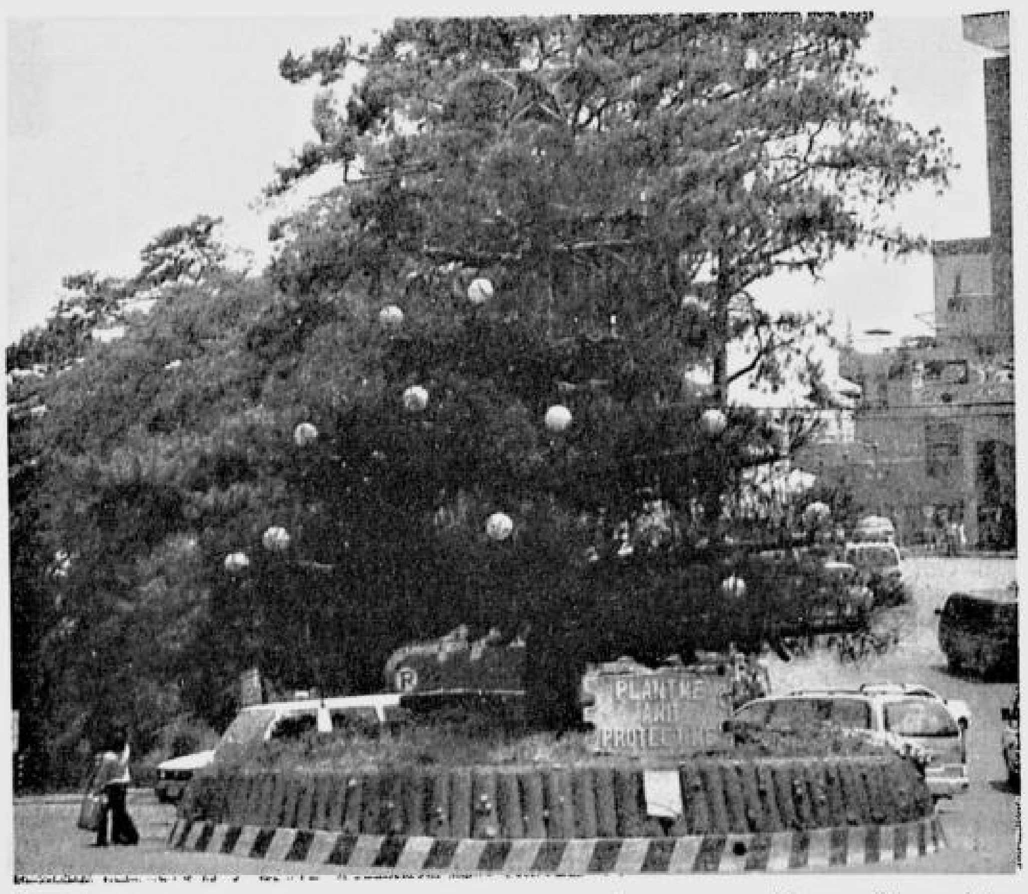
Jorge Madlos, spokesperson of the NDF in Mindanao, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview that failure to pay PTC fee would not result in failure of elections or push some candidates to the edge after paying it.

"Failure of elections may occur where there are intense military operations and election fraud by either party," he said.

"In fact, almost all of them (candidates) have already complied with the PTC requirements that also include their varying commitments to support peoples' issues and benefits," he added.

Madlos said the PTC fee is not a form of extortion but an inherent right of what he said was an existing and growing revolutionary government to implement taxation.

"Our revolutionary taxation follows the line of 'from the masses to the masses.' Thus, all proceeds we get from revolutionary taxation will, in turn, benefit the masses in the implementation of land reform, health, education and other social services, as well as arms and military logistics for its own army," he said. ***Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau***



ONE of the few remaining pine trees, albeit concrete, that was spared from politics and the environmental destruction that politics brings with it. Some architects in Baguio want to replace this with a real one, however. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Polls exact heavy toll on Baguio pine trees

BAGUIO CITY—The city's pine trees have suffered more from politicians this year than in any other elections, government environmentalists said here on Monday.

The city's general services office (GSO) turned over three truckloads of campaign paraphernalia, most of which were nailed or stapled on pine trees, in violation of a city ordinance that protects trees.

Except for a handful of candidates, the parties of administration standard-bearer President Macapagal-Arroyo, actor Fernando Poe Jr. and other candidates have been violating the ordinance since Feb. 10, the start of the election campaign, Romeo Concio, GSO chief, said.

Sensitive

Baguio has always been sensitive about its pine trees because of an ordinance that penalizes people who nail or bolt any signboard, advertising placard, or information campaign material on the trees.

The ordinance was enacted in 1990, months before the July 16, 1990 earthquake. It also prohibits people from stringing streamers around tree branches using wires, electric cords or cable television wires.

The ordinance punishes violators with an imprisonment of five to 20 days and fines of from P200 to P800.

"Even stapling the trees is prohibited by this ordinance," Concio said. He said the city government expected more protection for their trees because the new election law also forbids the use of trees for campaigning. "These are not designated campaign areas," he said.

"But no political parties approached the City Hall to coordinate their campaign, as expected. People came up to Baguio, stapled or nailed their campaign posters and streamers, and left, leaving us to clean up after them," he said.

Poe posters

Poe's hard cardboard posters, for example, are still conspicuously nailed on trees that line Burnham Park here.

Administration campaign materials, whether from Ms Macapagal's Lakas-CMD or the local alliance called Timpuyog ti Baguio, are also violators of the ordinance, Concio said.

Two trucks with 8-cubic meter payloads, and a smaller truck with a 3-cubic meter container ferried the confiscated materials to the Commission on Elections last week.

"I was hoping to recycle them, but we could no longer save posters that were glued, or the hard plastics (candidates used as small streamers), so they would simply add to the dumpsite," Concio said.

Environment agenda

He, however, acknowledged that candidates with a marked environmental agenda have managed to stick by Baguio's pine tree rule. "I saw very little posters of (opposition vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda) on trees," Concio said.

The Baguio Regreening Movement, a local conservation group, is still cataloguing these violations, although it had acquired the commitment of all political parties that "promised to spare all Baguio trees" during the campaign. *Vinc[illegible]t C[illegible]za, PDI Northern Luzo[illegible] [illegible]reau*

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Sarangani FPJ backers go to Gloria

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Supporters of KNP presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. in Alabel town in Sarangani province have defected to President Macapagal Arroyo's camp.

Nestor Camacho, chair of the 5,000-strong FPJ for President Movement (FPJPM) Alabel chapter, on Saturday told reporters that they defected after realizing that the actor was not qualified and not competent to cope with the rigors and pressures of the presidency.

They declared their withdrawal of support during a simple ceremony held at Purok 9, Alabel poblacion Saturday.

The affair was highlighted by the tearing down of streamers and the burning of FPJ posters by the FPJPM officials and members.

FPJ streamers were replaced with Bigkis Pinoy and President Macapagal's posters.

The Bigkis Pinoy streamers and posters showed Ms Macapagal and her running mate, TV personality Noli de Castro.

Camacho urged other voters not to entrust the future of the country to what he described as an inexperienced and incompetent candidate like Poe Jr.

He said among the the presidential candidates, Ms Macapagal was the most experienced and qualified.

He further said the President must be given another six-year term so there would be continuity of government programs and projects.

The defections came in the wake of efforts from both camps to woo supporters to their sides.

In Negros Occidental, reports said local officials are divided between Poe and Ms Macapagal.

But Rep. Julio Ledesma and four other provincial board members vowed to continue to support Ms Macapagal despite the decision of some provincial officials to support the opposition.

Ms Macapagal was one of the sponsors at the wedding between Ledesma and actress Assunta de Rossi.

The board members who are supporting Ms Macapagal are Angelito Colmenares (fifth district), Corazon Diploma (second) and Reynaldo Depasucat and Mardi Mapa Suplido (third).

Colmenares said that he respected Gov. Joseph Maranon's decision to go for Poe but he noted that it was a personal decision and not the stand of the party.

"I am committed to the governor, but will continue to support the presidential bid of Ms Macapagal-Arroyo, along with five other mayors of the fifth district," he said.

"I will stand on my commitment to the President, I have been campaigning for her and cannot shift support midstream," he said. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau with a report from Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Bet for Baguio mayor tries new tack in campaign vs 'rich, famous' rivals

By Delmar Carino
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Ranged against opponents whom he calls "rich and famous," an independent mayoral candidate here has embarked on a unique way of campaigning.

Felipe Tribunalo Ramos of 27 Dagohoy St. in Barangay Kagitingan here parks his dilapidated car on major roads of the city and leave it there for all voters to read his two streamers—"Ramos for Mayor."

The brown Mitsubishi Galant with Plate No. ABU-714 is only Ramos' visible campaign material.

True, he has printed 20,000 leaflets courtesy of friends who lent him money. But the same would pale to his rivals' big streamers and billboards spread all over the city's 129 barangays.

In fact, Ramos, 68, has no cellphone. He, too, campaigns alone and refuses to go on an intensive house-to-house sortie.

It is the car, bought last year for P36,000, that is left to do the campaigning for him. It has two loudspeakers on top. The "Ramos for Mayor" streamers drape its front hood and back windshield.

Ramos, a native of Toledo City in Cebu, literally parks the car on the road and leaves it there, without any campaign jingle coming from loud speakers, a driver, a supporter or Ramos himself.

After a day or two, the car will be moved to another parking area, mostly near road intersections.

Once, the car was seen near the bridge fronting Teachers' Camp. Then it was moved along Carino Street.

Next, the car was parked near the Justice Hall and as of this writing, it was seen near a waiting shed near UP Baguio.

Ramos admitted he gets his car at four in the morning and drives it to look for a new parking area.

"I have transferred the car 28 times since March 26," Ramos, a goldsmith who claims he finished political science at the BCF University here, told the INQUIRER.

"That's really my strategy so that I will get noticed since my opponents are all rich," he said.

"I even parked it near the Supreme Court compound," he said.

Ramos, who lives with wife Teodora in a small room in the crowded ground floor of the former Garden Theater on Dagohoy Street, said his car is his only way of fighting the "giants" of local politics here.

Lawyer Julius Torres, Baguio-Benguet head of the Commission on Elections, said Ramos' campaign approach is legal. "But if it is placed in a no parking zone, it's the problem of the traffic policemen," he said.

Ramos is up against reelectionist Mayor Bernardo Vergara (NPC-Lakas), Edgar Avila (PMP-LP Coalition for Baguio), Richard Carino (Aksyon Demokratiko) and Braulio Yaranon (LDP).

Tribal people in Southern Luzon learn election lessons, to take more intelligent look at bets

CALAPAN CITY—The Mangyans appreciate their right to vote as Filipinos and so majority of them are participating in the elections, said leaders of the province-wide Kapulungan para sa Lupaing Ninuno (KPLN).

This was confirmed by National Commission on Indigenous People Commissioner Lagtum Pasag, who said about 70-80 percent of Mangyan voters will participate in the elections as voters and candidates.

KPLN coordinator Ponyong Kaldos said the Mangyans in Bulalacao town, numbering 5,000 (out of about 11,000 total population), could make a candidate win if they cast a solid vote.

The Mangyans have attended the voters' education program through church workers.

Lessons learned

Mangyan leaders who were interviewed by the INQUIRER said they would vote for a candidate who has an indigenous people agenda and track record.

Among the Iraya in Puerto Galera, where there are about 4,000 families, the youth will be more involved.

Among the Alangan in Naujan, where more than 5,000 families comprise five barangays, the voters will look into who have helped them get their certificate of ancestral domain title.

Politicians have been courting their votes but the leaders said they know who among the aspirants truly respect their culture and rights.

Vote-buying

Still, vote-buying persists. Voters had been offered P100 each but the people have learned their lessons.

According to Bernabe Lintawagin of Paitan, a politician once gave P20,000 to a leader to win in their place.

"For the Mangyan, what is important is the future, so that candidate lost," he said.

Among the distant Bangon, Fernando Poe Jr. is not familiar. There are about 1,000 families there.

About 700 Tadyawan voters are in Victoria town.

The Buhid in Bongabong now asks politicians for conditions that benefit them.

The fight in this town is among President Macapagal-Arroyo for her programs extended to Mindoro, Poe for his mass appeal, Roco for free education achieved while he was senator, and Lacson, who carries De Castro, a native of Mindoro, for his vice president.

Many politicians have taken advantage of some Mangyans who are illiterate.

In Roxas town, the Mangyan have experienced being locked up in a place and fed until voting time when teachers themselves wrote for them.

SORSOGON CITY HALL
President Macapagal drops by the site of the new city hall of Sorsogon to lead groundbreaking rites for the new structure. The President made the side trip from a sortie in Borongan and Allen in Samar.

2 killed, 4 missing as pirates attack boat

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Two fishermen were killed while their four other companions were missing when their fishing vessel was attacked by suspected sea pirates over the weekend.

One of the two fatalities was identified as a Lucresio Generalao, a resident of this city. The other slain victim remains unidentified as of late yesterday afternoon.

Lita Silvero, younger sister of Generalao, told reporters that the fishing vessel MV James Bond owned by the Generalao family was found by other fishermen drifting in the high seas without its crewmen.

When the vessel was checked, it yielded the bodies of the slain fishermen.

The vessel's engine and other personal belongings of the crew were also missing.

Local authorities said the vessel and its crew came under attack by sea pirates. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NDF says campaign fees won't stall polls

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The National Democratic Front (NDF) in Mindanao allayed fears of Catholic bishops and the National Secretariat for Social Action, Justice and Peace of a possible failure of elections because of its collection of permit-to-campaign (PTC) fees.

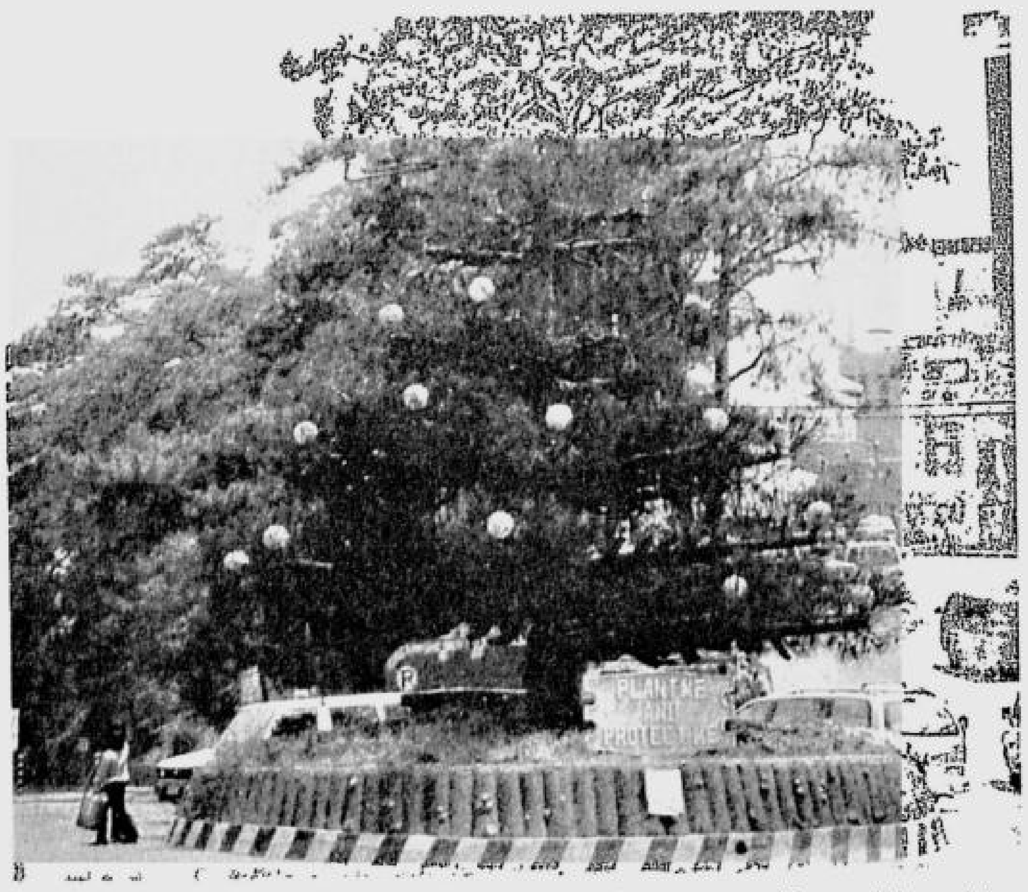
Jorge Madlos, spokesperson of the NDF in Mindanao, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview that failure to pay PTC fee would not result in failure of elections or push some candidates to the edge after paying it.

"Failure of elections may occur where there are intense military operations and election fraud by either party," he said.

"In fact, almost all of them (candidates) have already complied with the PTC requirements that also include their varying commitments to support peoples' issues and benefits," he added.

Madlos said the PTC fee is not a form of extortion but an inherent right of what he said was an existing and growing revolutionary government to implement taxation.

"Our revolutionary taxation follows the line of 'from the masses to the masses.' Thus, all proceeds we get from revolutionary taxation will, in turn, benefit the masses in the implementation of land reform, health, education and other social services, as well as arms and military logistics for its own army," he said. *Grace C. Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



ONE of the few remaining pine trees, albeit concrete, that was spared from politics and the environmental destruction that politics brings with it. Some architects in Baguio want to replace this with a real one, however.
OOTS SOBERANO, PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Polls exact heavy toll on Baguio pine trees

BAGUIO CITY—The city's pine trees have suffered more from politicians this year than in any other elections, government environmentalists said here on Monday.

The city's general services office (GSO) turned over three truckloads of campaign paraphernalia, most of which were nailed or stapled on pine trees, in violation of a city ordinance that protects trees.

Except for a handful of candidates, the parties of administration standard-bearer President Macapagal-Arroyo, actor Fernando Poe Jr. and other candidates have been violating the ordinance since Feb. 10, the start of the election campaign, Romeo Concio, GSO chief, said.

Sensitive

Baguio has always been sensitive about its pine trees because of an ordinance that penalizes people who nail or bolt any signboard, advertising placard, or information campaign material on the trees.

The ordinance was enacted in 1990, months before the July 16, 1990 earthquake. It also prohibits people from stringing streamers around tree branches using wires, electric cords or cable television wires.

The ordinance punishes violators with an imprisonment of five to 20 days and fines of from P200 to P800.

"Even stapling the trees is prohibited by this ordinance," Concio said. He said the city government expected more protection for their trees because the new election law also forbids the use of trees for campaigning. "These are not designated campaign areas," he said.

"But no political parties approached the City Hall to coordinate their campaign, as expected. People came up to Baguio, stapled or nailed their campaign posters and streamers, and left, leaving us to clean up after them," he said.

Poe posters

Poe's hard cardboard posters, for example, are still conspicuously nailed on trees that line Burnham Park here

Administration campaign materials, whether from Ms Macapagal's Lakas-CMD or the local alliance called Timpuyog di Baguio, are also violators of the ordinance, Concio said.

Two trucks with 8-cubic meter payloads, and a smaller truck with a 3-cubic meter container ferried the confiscated materials to the Commission on Elections last week.

"I was hoping to recycle them, but we could no longer save posters that were glued or the hard plastics (candidates used as small streamers), so they would simply add to the dumpsite," Concio said.

Environment agenda

He, however, acknowledged that candidates with a marked environmental agenda have managed to stick by Baguio's pine tree rule. "I saw [illegible] little posters of (opposition vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda) on trees," Concio said.

The Baguio Regreening Movement, a local conservation group, is still cataloguing these violations, although it had acquired the commitment of all political parties that "promised to spare the Baguio trees" during the campaign. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Paradise regained: Estrada birthday …

From page A1

looks a fountain. A mini-lake on a hill is a portrait of serenity.

There's a 14-door dormitory and convention center known as the JE Youth Camp which had been rented out to private schools.

Beside the convention center is a swimming pool.

10 structures

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Renovations

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"It is only now that I am initiating all these renovations," he told the INQUIRER.

A mid-morning Mass was said at the chapel made of steel and glass and with a marble altar. But the INQUIRER was asked to leave before the Mass due to a Sandiganbayan order barring the presence of reporters from the birthday party.

Ocular inspection today

Asked about how he felt about today's scheduled ocular inspection to be conducted by the Sandiganbayan justices, Estrada said he was not going to allow the justices to check the whole place, especially those still "under renovation."

"It's OK if they check my place out," he said, pointing to the bungalow.

He said he had nothing to hide in the resort, which he acquired and improved using the money he earned when he was one of the country's highest-paid actors and while he was mayor of San Juan. He also used the rental fees from the JE Youth Camp for the renovations.

WELL-WISHERS of former President Joseph Estrada don't mind waiting on empty stomachs outside the forbidding gates of their idol's 15-hectare estate while his birthday bash is going on.

JOAN BONDOC

Guests

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Among the early birds were President Macapagal-Arroyo's half-sister, Cielo Macapagal, who is running for vice governor in Pampanga, and Estrada's daughter Jackie and son-in-law Beaver Lopez. They reportedly gifted Estrada with a pair of peacocks.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona came at noon. Jinggoy Estrada and several KNP candidates arrived by helicopter.

By 3 p.m., eight helicopters had landed at and taken off from the resort. Others arrived in their Toyota Prados, Pajeros, Isuzu Troopers, Ford Expeditions, BMWs and Mercedes Benzes.

Beyond the walls

Outside, about 200 Estrada loyalists, arrived by jeepneys and tricycles from Fairview, Quezon City, and San Juan, Metro Manila. Though they were not fed, they reveled in watching the well-heeled well-wishers of their idol.

Patiently in the sweltering heat, they waited for a glimpse of either Estrada or KNP presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. But Poe had yet to show up by 7 p.m.

By early evening, the "outsides" were fed when plastic bags containing *lechon* from the buffet table was thrown over the gate by police sentries.

Asked earlier whether they minded waiting outside the resort on empty stomachs, they said they did not.

"Maybe he's too busy attending to his VIP guests to order food to be served to us. He cannot be expected to attend to all these things," said Amparo Guballo, who was with Estrada in his two birthdays at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center where Estrada was detained prior to Camp Capinpin.

Ice drops

Like members of the media, many of the Estrada loyalists enjoyed six-peso "ice drops" and candies sold by ambulant vendors.

At a corner a hungry 4-year-old girl was crying. When the mother was asked whether it was fair to leave her child hungry while a feast was going on inside, she said: "I'll just give her candy to quiet her down." *With a report from Volt Contreras*

GMA gives pen holder to Estrada

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

LAST YEAR, it was an organizer. This time, a double-pen holder was President Macapagal-Arroyo's gift to her detained predecessor Joseph Estrada on his 67th birthday yesterday.

In December last year, the President gave golf carts to Estrada, who is suffering from arthritic knees.

She also sent him wishes for recovery from his ailment and for a comfortable life in detention.

But the President's spokesperson said Estrada's wish that Ms Macapagal would lose in the May elections would not be fulfilled.

"The President has always wished former President Estrada well. She wants him to recover from his ailment and the President has always wanted that [he] be treated very humanely," said Ignacio Bunye, who celebrated his 59th birthday yesterday.

Malacañang supported the Sandiganbayan's decision to allow Estrada to celebrate his 67th birthday at his 15-hectare vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal.

"The President wished the former President comfort and peace of mind and that he would find it in his heart to work for peace and reconciliation for the country," said Michael Defensor, campaign spokesperson for the President and her personal emissary to Estrada.

Defensor said the President did not ask Estrada to refrain from helping and endorsing the opposition.

"The President doesn't begrudge President Estrada even if he had wished that the country will have a new President in May," he said.

Estrada endorsed opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. in one of his rallies, through a live radio interview played before the crowd.

Bunye said Estrada's wish for a new President in May would not be fulfilled.

"We see indications, a trend for the President. Based on credible surveys, and we can see from the chaos in the other camp that our wish would come true rather than President Erap's wish," Bunye said.

Bunye said his own birthday wish was: "May the best woman presidential candidate win."

Corrections

THE PHILIPPINE Center for Investigative Journalism apologizes for the following errors in its report on the senatorial race, which appeared in the INQUIRER yesterday:

- Sen. John "Sonny" Osmeña's father was not in the Senate. The senators in the Osmeña family, apart from him, were his uncle Sergio Jr., grandfather Sergio Sr., and cousin Serge or Sergio III.
- Before 1986, there were two (not one) presidents who were not elected to the Senate—Ramon Magsaysay and Diosdado Macapagal.
- Ramon Revilla is a two-term (not three-term) senator, having served 12 years in the Senate.

FPJ-Lacson talks stalled

From page A1

and I'm not withdrawing," Lacson said of the text messages, circulated after it was announced the meeting was canceled.

One text message went: "Confidential information from Manila: Lacson slides to VP of FPJ, Loren to senator, but with the promise she'll be the VP of Lacson in 2010. Announcement tonight (at) Erap's birthday. INK brokered arrangement."

Sen. Edgardo Angara, whom Lacson wanted removed from the KNP, said he was not objecting in any way to the unification talks between Poe and Lacson.

"I'm in favor of that. Who would not? Any right-thinking oppositionist would like that to succeed," Angara said.

He said that whatever Poe and Lacson agreed on would be "great for the opposition."

"I have no problem with Lacson joining the opposition," Angara said. "I'm hopeful that it (unity talks) will succeed because any right-thinking opposition would fervently want everyone to be on the opposition wagon. Only that would ensure the victory of democracy."

Angara said he was not interfering in the negotiations between the two candidates.

"The candidate [Poe] is doing the talking all by himself. He's not talking to any of us," Angara said. He added that unity was still possible.

Angara said the chances of Poe and Lacson meeting this week were "very good."

Asked if the Poe and Lacson camps still have time to unify, Angara said: "There's a lot of time. Even in the last week" of the campaign.

Stumbling block

But Estrada sounded pessimistic over the possibility of a unified opposition.

"Ping is the stumbling block," Estrada said on his 67th birthday yesterday. He described Lacson's political play as "deep (*malalim*)."

"We are checking on reports that Lucio Tan (cigarette and alcohol magnate) has offered Ping a deal to keep him from vowing out of the race. In exchange for thwarting efforts to unite the opposition, Tan has provided Ping with hundreds of millions of campaign contributions and the promise that he will be cleared in his criminal cases involving the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case," he said.

Tan is reportedly supporting Ms Macapagal, who is seeking a full six-year term.

Asked for specifics, Estrada said they were still checking the matter out.

Lacson himself had said that the main obstacle to a unified opposition was his and Poe's respective decisions not to give way to each other.

Angara noted that Poe had already stated his position that he was not going to withdraw his candidacy or let his running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, be replaced.

"It's the judgment of our presidential candidate. We leave it entirely to him," said Angara, president of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, a major party in the KNP coalition.

Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, who is in charge of the administrative aspect of the KNP campaign, said both Poe and Lacson had a conflict in schedule that made it impossible to meet yesterday.

Oreta said Poe was free yesterday morning while Lacson could only be free in the afternoon.

Lacson called off meeting?

But former Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay, Poe's overall campaign manager, said it was Lacson who called off the meeting supposedly scheduled by the two camps for 10 a.m.

Binay said Lacson's camp sought to change the meeting for the afternoon instead. It was Lacson's camp that offered the 10 a.m. schedule for yesterday, according to him.

Actually, Lacson's camp offered to hold the meeting either at 10 a.m. or 4 p.m. Poe's camp, after checking its schedule, agreed to the 10 a.m. schedule.

But Binay said the KNP was informed the other day that Lacson could not make the 10 a.m. schedule and instead was free in the afternoon until early evening.

"That the Lacson camp had changed its decision on that schedule … is a matter, that at best, we cannot understand," Binay said in a statement.

Not critical factor

Binay made it clear that the cancellation of the meeting "cannot be attributed to us."

"Suffice it to say that confrontational posturing or adversarial, baseless and irresponsible statements coming from the Lacson camp certainly detract from an atmosphere conducive to such talks," he said.

Binay cited the fact that Poe never called Lacson Sunday night and that nothing had been discussed between the two on how to resolve the problem of the senatorial candidates they would support in the event of a merger.

"And while our doors remain open to unification, we cannot, as we had not in the past, consider it as a critical factor in the course of the presidential campaign," Binay said.

The Lacson camp said Poe called up the senator on Sunday night to tell the senator the actor was available for a one-on-one meeting from morning until noon.

"As much as possible, we wanted the talks to push through (yesterday). There might not have been any agreement but it would have still been good if they had talked," said Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla, Lacson's lone senatorial candidate.

Non-negotiable

Lacson said Padilla's position as opposition senatorial candidate was non-negotiable.

He said it was the problem of the KNP whom to drop from its full senatorial slate to accommodate Padilla in a united opposition ticket.

There is "absolutely no chance" for Poe to back out from the presidential race and give way to Lacson, KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda said in San Fernando City.

"Even common sense tells you that the weaker candidate should back out," Maceda said, referring to Lacson:

"All surveys show that FPJ (has garnered) more than 30 percent, from 31 to 39 percent fluctuating up and down. And all surveys show a consistent 10 to 11 percent for Lacson. So in three weeks' time, I don't think Lacson can catch up 200 percent and I don't think you can necessarily transfer the FPJ votes to Lacson. It's easier to transfer the Lacson votes to FPJ," Maceda said on "Talking Points," a cable television talk show in Pampanga.

GMA sure to win if …

Ms Macapagal is "certain to win unless the opposition unites and fields a common presidential candidate," said Rep. Jose Apolinario Lozada Jr. (Negros Occidental), who had recently bolted the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats to cast his lot with Poe.

Lozada said that forging unification "next week may already be too late."

KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Herrera said that unity must be achieved "sooner than later."

"Remember, the administration is in control of the government which has the biggest machinery for electoral fraud," Herrera said. "It would be more desirable that broader opposition unity is achieved."

Even administration candidates acknowledge that a unification meeting is the opposition's last best hope to defeat Ms Macapagal.

"This is an admission of their weakness and that their previous claims of invincibility were all hot air," Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano of Taguig-Pateros said.

No match

He said that even if Poe and Lacson agreed to unite, they would still be no match to the President because of the expected surge of support from her local candidates.

Cayetano, the House assistant majority Leader, said the opposition had to call for the unification meeting after it was thrown into panic by the most recent Pulse Asia survey showing the President now leading the race by three percentage points. *With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Cynthia D. Balana and Carlito Pablo in Manila; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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60 Viet tourists' visit to Spratlys …

From page A1

nam, signed in 2002 a non-binding declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

Ebdalin said that under the code, claimants must "undertake to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability … and to handle their differences in a constructive manner."

But Ebdalin refused to categorically say if the boat trip to the Spratlys organized by Vietnam would disrupt the status quo.

'Get all the facts'

"We [the claimant countries] would have to deliberate whether this would violate the provisions of the code," he said, adding, "we have to get all the facts."

He said the DFA had yet to receive an official confirmation from its embassy in Hanoi of the controversial Spratlys trip.

The embassy had asked Vietnam's foreign affairs ministry about it but has so far not received any formal answer.

Ebdalin hinted the controversy could be sorted out through Asean diplomatic channels.

"We have to remember that Vietnam is a member of the Asean so we have to do this through consultation," he said.

"I'm sure the countries claiming the area would have an interest in finding out but under the code, there are no sanctions, only moral suasions," he said.

5 instances

The code enumerates only five instances when claimants may conduct explorations or undertake cooperative activities. These are marine environmental protection, marine scientific research, safety of navigation and communication at sea, search and rescue operation, and combating transnational crime.

Brushing aside the diplomatic furor, a Vietnam navy ship carrying about 60 tourists and 40 officials left Ho Chi Minh City yesterday.

8-day voyage

They were seen boarding the white navy ship HQ988 for an eight-day round trip.

"The boat is on its way to Truong Sa (Spratlys) as we speak. This is more like a test tour and if it is successful we will have more in the future when foreign tourists will be welcome to participate," an official from the Vietnam National Tourism Administration told Reuters.

Vietnam has said the tour is aimed at asserting its sovereignty claims over the Spratlys, long regarded by diplomats as a potential flash point.

Foreign media were not permitted to go on the maiden trip, which was organized by a military-run company.

The tourists included the director of a trading company and a volunteer tour agent, the Vietnam News daily reported.

Malaysians, too

The tourists will meet Vietnamese soldiers stationed on the Truong Sa Lon islands, scuba dive at reefs and pass through the Dai Hung oil field. Also on the agenda is a visit to Con Dao, where the former French colonial rulers maintained prisons.

Vietnam's Defense Minister Pham Van Tra has said Hanoi is acting in accordance with Asean's principles.

Vietnam would not be the first to send tourists to the archipelago, citing a similar tour by Malaysia.

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By 3 p.m., eight helicopters had landed at and taken off from the resort. Others arrived in their Toyota Prados, Pajeros, Isuzu Troopers, Ford Expeditions, BMWs and Mercedes Benzes.

Beyond the walls

Outside, about 200 Estrada loyalists, arrived by jeepneys and tricycles from Fairview, Quezon City, and San Juan, Metro Manila. Though they were not fed, they reveled in watching the well-heeled well-wishers of their idol.

Patiently in the sweltering heat, they waited for a glimpse of either Estrada or KNP presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. But Poe had yet to show up by 7 p.m.

By early evening, the "outsides" were fed when plastic bags containing *lechon* from the buffet table was thrown over the gate by police sentries.

Asked earlier whether they minded waiting outside the resort on empty stomachs, they said they did not.

"Maybe he's too busy attending to his VIP guests to order food to be served to us. He cannot be expected to attend to all these things," said Amparo Guballo, who was with Estrada in his two birthdays at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center where Estrada was detained prior to Camp Capinpin.

Ice drops

Like members of the media, many of the Estrada loyalists enjoyed six-peso "ice drops" and candies sold by ambulant vendors.

At a corner a hungry 4-year-old girl was crying. When the mother was asked whether it was fair to leave her child hungry while a feast was going on inside, she said: "I'll just give her candy to quiet her down." *With a report from Volt Contreras*

GMA gives pen holder to Estrada

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

LAST YEAR, it was an organizer. This time, a double-pen holder was President Macapagal-Arroyo's gift to her detained predecessor Joseph Estrada on his 67th birthday yesterday.

In December last year, the President gave golf carts to Estrada, who is suffering from arthritic knees.

She also sent him wishes for recovery from his ailment and for a comfortable life in detention.

But the President's spokesperson said Estrada's wish that Ms Macapagal would lose in the May elections would not be fulfilled.

"The President has always wished former President Estrada well. She wants him to recover from his ailment and the President has always wanted that [he] be treated very humanely," said Ignacio Bunye, who celebrated his 59th birthday yesterday.

Malacañang supported the Sandiganbayan's decision to allow Estrada to celebrate his 67th birthday at his 15-hectare vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal.

"The President wished the former President comfort and peace of mind and that he would find it in his heart to work for peace and reconciliation for the country," said Michael Defensor, campaign spokesperson for the President and her personal emissary to Estrada.

Defensor said the President did not ask Estrada to refrain from helping and endorsing the opposition.

"The President doesn't begrudge President Estrada even if he had wished that the country will have a new President in May," he said.

Estrada endorsed opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. in one of his rallies, through a live radio interview played before the crowd.

Bunye said Estrada's wish for a new President in May would not be fulfilled.

"We see indications, a trend for the President. Based on credible surveys, and we can see from the chaos in the other camp that our wish would come true rather than President Erap's wish," Bunye said.

Bunye said his own birthday wish was: "May the best woman presidential candidate win."

FPJ-Lacson talks stalled

From page A1

and I'm not withdrawing," Lacson said of the text messages, circulated after it was announced the meeting was canceled.

One text message went: "Confidential information from Manila: Lacson slides to VP of FPJ, Loren to senator, but with the promise she'll be the VP of Lacson in 2010. Announcement tonight (at) Erap's birthday. INK brokered arrangement."

Sen. Edgardo Angara, whom Lacson wanted removed from the KNP, said he was not objecting in any way to the unification talks between Poe and Lacson.

"I'm in favor of that. Who would not? Any right-thinking oppositionist would like that to succeed," Angara said.

He said that whatever Poe and Lacson agreed on would be "great for the opposition."

"I have no problem with Lacson joining the opposition," Angara said. "I'm hopeful that it (unity talks) will succeed because any right-thinking opposition would fervently want everyone to be on the opposition wagon. Only that would ensure the victory of democracy."

Angara said he was not interfering in the negotiations between the two candidates.

"The candidate [Poe] is doing the talking all by himself. He's not talking to any of us," Angara said. He added that unity was still possible.

Angara said the chances of Poe and Lacson meeting this week were "very good."

Asked if the Poe and Lacson camps still have time to unify, Angara said: "There's a lot of time. Even in the last week" of the campaign.

Stumbling block

But Estrada sounded pessimistic over the possibility of a unified opposition.

"Ping is the stumbling block," Estrada said on his 67th birthday yesterday. He described Lacson's political play as "deep (*malalim*)."

"We are checking on reports that Lucio Tan (cigarette and alcohol magnate) has offered Ping a deal to keep him from vowing out of the race. In exchange for thwarting efforts to unite the opposition, Tan has provided Ping with hundreds of millions of campaign contributions and the promise that he will be cleared in his criminal cases involving the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case," he said.

Tan is reportedly supporting Ms Macapagal, who is seeking a full six-year term.

Asked for specifics, Estrada said they were still checking the matter out.

Lacson himself had said that the main obstacle to a unified opposition was his and Poe's respective decisions not to give way to each other.

Angara noted that Poe had already stated his position that he was not going to withdraw his candidacy or let his running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, be replaced.

"It's the judgment of our presidential candidate. We leave it entirely to him," said Angara, president of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, a major party in the KNP coalition.

Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, who is in charge of the administrative aspect of the KNP campaign, said both Poe and Lacson had a conflict in schedule that made it impossible to meet yesterday.

Oreta said Poe was free yesterday morning while Lacson could only be free in the afternoon.

Lacson called off meeting?

But former Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay, Poe's overall campaign manager, said it was Lacson who called off the meeting supposedly scheduled by the two camps for 10 a.m.

Binay said Lacson's camp sought to change the meeting for the afternoon instead. It was Lacson's camp that offered the 10 a.m. schedule for yesterday, according to him.

Actually, Lacson's camp offered to hold the meeting either at 10 a.m. or 4 p.m. Poe's camp, after checking its schedule, agreed to the 10 a.m. schedule.

But Binay said the KNP was informed the other day that Lacson could not make the 10 a.m. schedule and instead was free in the afternoon until early evening.

"That the Lacson camp had changed its decision on that schedule … is a matter, that at best, we cannot understand," Binay said in a statement.

Not critical factor

Binay made it clear that the cancellation of the meeting "cannot be attributed to us."

"Suffice it to say that confrontational posturing or adversarial, baseless and irresponsible statements coming from the Lacson camp certainly detract from an atmosphere conducive to such talks," he said.

Binay cited the fact that Poe never called Lacson Sunday night and that nothing had been discussed between the two on how to resolve the problem of the senatorial candidates they would support in the event of a merger.

"And while our doors remain open to unification, we cannot, as we had not in the past, consider it as a critical factor in the course of the presidential campaign," Binay said.

The Lacson camp said Poe called up the senator on Sunday night to tell the senator the actor was available for a one-on-one meeting from morning until noon.

"As much as possible, we wanted the talks to push through (yesterday). There might not have been any agreement but it would have still been good if they had talked," said Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla, Lacson's lone senatorial candidate.

Non-negotiable

Lacson said Padilla's position as opposition senatorial candidate was non-negotiable.

He said it was the problem of the KNP whom to drop from its full senatorial slate to accommodate Padilla in a united opposition ticket.

There is "absolutely no chance" for Poe to back out from the presidential race and give way to Lacson, KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda said in San Fernando City.

"Even common sense tells you that the weaker candidate should back out," Maceda said, referring to Lacson:

"All surveys show that FPJ (has garnered) more than 30 percent, from 31 to 39 percent fluctuating up and down. And all surveys show a consistent 10 to 11 percent for Lacson. So in three weeks' time, I don't think Lacson can catch up 200 percent and I don't think you can necessarily transfer the FPJ votes to Lacson. It's easier to transfer the Lacson votes to FPJ," Maceda said on "Talking Points," a cable television talk show in Pampanga.

GMA sure to win if …

Ms Macapagal is "certain to win unless the opposition unites and fields a common presidential candidate," said Rep. Jose Apolinario Lozada Jr. (Negros Occidental), who had recently bolted the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats to cast his lot with Poe.

Lozada said that forging unification "next week may already be too late."

KNP senatorial candidate Ernesto Herrera said that unity must be achieved "sooner than later."

"Remember, the administration is in control of the government which has the biggest machinery for electoral fraud," Herrera said. "It would be more desirable that broader opposition unity is achieved."

Even administration candidates acknowledge that a unification meeting is the opposition's last best hope to defeat Ms Macapagal.

"This is an admission of their weakness and that their previous claims of invincibility were all hot air," Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano of Taguig-Pateros said.

No match

He said that even if Poe and Lacson agreed to unite, they would still be no match to the President because of the expected surge of support from her local candidates.

Cayetano, the House assistant majority Leader, said the opposition had to call for the unification meeting after it was thrown into panic by the most recent Pulse Asia survey showing the President now leading the race by three percentage points. *With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Cynthia D. Balana and Carlito Pablo in Manila; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Corrections

THE PHILIPPINE Center for Investigative Journalism apologizes for the following errors in its report on the senatorial race, which appeared in the INQUIRER yesterday:

- Sen. John "Sonny" Osmeña's father was not in the Senate. The senators in the Osmeña family apart from him, were his uncle Sergio Jr grandfather Sergio Sr., and cousin Serge or Sergio III
- Before 1986, there were two (not one) presidents who were not elected to the Senate—Ramon Magsaysay and Diosdado Macapagal
- Ramon Revilla is a two-term (not three-term) senator, having served 12 years in the Senate

60 Viet tourists' visit to Spratlys …

From page A1

nam, signed in 2002 a non-binding declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

Ebdalin said that under the code, claimants must "undertake to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability and to handle their differences in a constructive manner."

But Ebdalin refused to categorically say if the boat trip to the Spratlys organized by Vietnam would disrupt the status quo.

'Get all the facts'

"We [the claimant countries] would have to deliberate whether this would violate the provisions of the code," he said, adding, "we have to get all the facts."

He said the DFA had yet to receive an official confirmation from its embassy in Hanoi of the controversial Spratlys trip.

The embassy had asked Vietnam's foreign affairs ministry about it but has so far not received any formal answer.

Ebdalin hinted the controversy could be sorted out through Asean diplomatic channels.

"We have to remember that Vietnam is a member of the Asean so we have to do this through consultation," he said.

"I'm sure the countries claiming the area would have an interest in finding out but under the code, there are no sanctions, only moral suasions," he said.

5 instances

The code enumerates only five instances when claimants may conduct explorations or undertake cooperative activities. These are marine environmental protection, marine scientific research, safety of navigation and communication at sea, search and rescue operation, and combating transnational crime.

Brushing aside the diplomatic furor, a Vietnam navy ship carrying about 60 tourists and 40 officials left Ho Chi Minh City yesterday.

8-day voyage

They were seen boarding the white navy ship HQ988 for an eight-day round trip.

"The boat is on its way to Truong Sa (Spratlys) as we speak. This is more like a test tour and if it is successful we will have more in the future when foreign tourists will be welcome to participate," an official from the Vietnam National Tourism Administration told Reuters.

Vietnam has said the tour is aimed at asserting its sovereignty claims over the Spratlys, long regarded by diplomats as a potential flash point.

Foreign media were not permitted to go on the maiden trip which was organized by a military-run company.

The tourists included the director of a trading company and a volunteer tour agent, the Vietnam News daily reported.

Malaysians, too

The tourists will meet Vietnamese soldiers stationed on the Truong Sa Lon islands, scuba dive at reefs and pass through the Dai Hung oil field. Also on the agenda is a visit to Con Dao, where the former French colonial rulers maintained prisons.

Vietnam's Defense Minister Pham Van Tra has said Hanoi is acting in accordance with Asean's principles.

Vietnam would not be the first to send tourists to the archipelago, citing a similar tour by Malaysia.

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METROBRIEFS

Rob suspect slain

ONE OF the three robbery suspects who divested a couple of at least P100,000 payroll money was killed by a security guard in Quezon City yesterday afternoon. Police said the suspect, who has yet to be identified, bore a gunshot wound in the back and was found dead by lawmen at 12:05 p.m. on 18th Avenue and Boni Serrano, in Cubao. Recovered from the suspect was a .45-caliber pistol. Police theorized that the suspect was left behind by his cohorts after he was fired upon and hit by a security guard at the Petron gasoline station on Aurora Boulevard. It was there where the suspects earlier held up Felicidad Zacarias-Abuya and her husband, Romualdo, and took payroll money worth P100,000 before fleeing on board a motorcycle. *Tina Santos*

Case vs Shell

A FORMER employee of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. has filed a complaint for illegal dismissal against the company and two of its officers with the National Labor Relations Commission. Complainant Ma. Victoria-C. Medina, former communications manager of Shell, was served notice of termination effective Dec. 15, 2003. In a statement, Medina complained that Edgar O. Chua and Roberto S. Kanapi, both her supervisors when the termination notice was served, had summarily ignored her experience in the field of communications and public relations practice, and discriminated against her because of gender and age. Medina filed the case on Jan. 22. Two hearings had been set for March 16 and 23. On both days, the representatives for Shell, Chua and Kanapi failed to make an appearance. A third hearing is set today at 2 p.m.

Turn to cry foul

NOW IT'S his turn to cry harassment from his rivals. Three supporters of Caloocan City Mayor Rey Malonzo were injured and two of his cars used in campaigning were damaged after about 50 people allegedly attacked his supporters who were just pasting campaign posters yesterday. Malonzo yesterday accused the camp of Rep. Edgar Erice of harassing his and his wife's supporters. But Erice quickly denied that his men were involved in the alleged attack. Erice said the people involved were just sympathizers who got furious when they saw Malonzo's men pasting posters over the posters of other candidates. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

FLASHFLOOD
A sudden downpour Monday brought flashfloods to some areas in Makati like this one in Calazanz Street, providing children with temporary relief from the summer heat. RANDY HORMILLOSA

One-ticket system for MRT, LRT set

By Clarissa S. Batino

RIDERS of the Metro Rail Transit and the Light Rail Transit can now use a single ticket, according to the Department of Transportation and Communication.

It said yesterday that the introduction of the one-ticket system could result in about 15 percent increase in the number of passengers.

Ridership in the MRT and LRT lines are currently placed at about 760,000.

The single-ticket, called Flash Pass, could be used in the MRT, which runs from Pasay City to North Edsa, as well as the LRT Line 1 and Line 2. Line 1 spans Baclaran to Monumento, while Line 2 stretches from Santolan in Pasig to Legarda in Manila.

Transport Undersecretary Jose Cortes Jr. said that based on a government study, 20 percent of the estimated 760,000 Metro Manila commuters who take the MRT and LRT daily transfer from one line to another.

"We expect 10 percent of this will avail of the Flash Pass and that more passengers will take the MRT and LRT because they would realize it's more convenient," Cortes said.

Cortes said that with the unified ticketing system, commuters need not queue for tickets each time they transfer from one line to another.

"The pass will spare passengers from lining up for a ticket when transferring from one line to another. This will make riding the MRT or LRT more convenient for passengers," Cortes said.

LRT administrator Pacifico Fajardo said Flash Pass would allow the Philippines to catch up with neighbors that have been using a similar system for their railway.

MRT general manager Roberto Lastimoso said the new project incurred no expense for the government.

Traffic fines can now be paid in banks

By Margaux Ortiz

ERRING motorists could now pay their traffic fines through banks instead of going to limited Metropolitan Manila Development Authority redemption centers, according to MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando said that the agency has tapped the services of Metrobank and Trust Company (Metrobank) to serve as payment centers for traffic violators.

The MMDA chair said that under the arrangement, an erring motorist can go to any of the 583 Metrobank branches nationwide to settle traffic fines and penalties.

Fernando said the new mode of payment will be more convenient for motorists, especially those coming from the provinces.

"This will enhance the agency's no-contact traffic apprehension (NCTA) and remove various forms of anomalous transactions," Fernando said.

According to NCTA head Ramon Santiago, 1,800 deputized enforcers and MMDA agents apprehend approximately 2,700 traffic violators daily.

Santiago added that the NCTA produces 2,300 summons daily, which is expected to increase to 12,000 once additional 100 digital cameras are acquired.

"Considering the anticipated number of total daily apprehensions, the collection system of the MMDA is not sufficient to meet the demand," Santiago said.

Fernando warned motorists that failure to settle the fine after seven days would lead to the impounding of the vehicle and the payment of a P5,000 fine.

Bench warrant vs Gil

A MAKATI judge yesterday issued a bench warrant against presidential candidate Eddie Gil and his right hand, Elizabeth Samson, for failing to appear at a court arraignment yesterday.

Judge Evelyn Arcaya-Chua of Makati Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 63 ordered Gil and Samson, charged with violation against Batas Pambansa 22 or Anti-Bouncing Checks Law, to post a P1,000 bail each.

Complainant RJ Music City Inc., represented by Precila Arellano, accused Gil and Samson of issuing Planters Bank and Equitable-PCI checks on Nov. 16, 2001 and Jan. 21, 2002 to pay for P270,000 worth of musical instruments and accessories at their Park Square Makati branch.

The complainant said the accused later agreed to their verbal demands, but paid only P10,000.

According to court records, the respondents failed to submit their controverting evidence four times during the preliminary investigation.

Samson said in a phone interview that they were not able to attend the arraignment because of illness. *Margaux Ortiz*

Habitat to help rebuild Baseco

FAMILIES who lost their homes in a fire that razed Baseco Compound last January have something to look forward to in the next six months.

The Habitat for Humanity Philippines Foundation Inc. has pledged to build 1,000 housing units for fire victims in Baseco Compound in Port Area, Manila.

"Baseco would be our centerpiece this year. We would be rebuilding an entire community," said HFHP board member Margie Moran-Floirendo.

Floirendo and Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. signed a memorandum of agreement at the Manila City Hall yesterday on the partnership.

The agreement provides the building of at least 500 one-story housing units before the end of this year. *Tarra Quismundo*

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Dick Gordon's high sense of civic spirit

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE TOWNSFOLK of Talavera, Nueva Ecija, led by Mayor Manolito Faustino, have high praises for senatorial candidate Dick Gordon for leading firefighting and rescue efforts during the fire at the old public market in the town last week.

"He came just in time," said Fausto.

Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, saw the burning market as he was passing through the town on a campaign sortie.

Helping people in distress is typically Dick Gordon.

In 1990, a schoolbuilding collapsed in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija during a strong earthquake, trapping some students. Dick Gordon, then Olongapo City mayor, sent City Hall employees to the disaster scene. A very influential figure with the Americans, he also asked Subic Naval Base officials to send military rescuers to the scene.

In 1993, a floating pagoda full of celebrators sank during a fluvial parade in Bocaue, Bulacan. drowning more than 200 persons. Dick Gordon, who was chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, was the first official to respond to a call for help from Bocaue town officials. He sent a team of SBMA divers led by his cousin, Jim Robertson, to help in recovering drowning victims.

A few months ago when he was tourism secretary, he was in his car traveling along Quirino Avenue in Manila after coming from a meeting. He chanced upon a woman who was having difficulty changing a flat tire. Dick got down from his car and ordered his bodyguards to help the woman.

Even off the campaign trail, Dick has a very high sense of civic spirit and charity.

* * *

What's this I heard that a top official of the Western Police District (WPD) is demanding P200,000 from each gambling lord in Manila supposedly for the campaign chest of a politician?

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza says he is definitely not that politician that the WPD official is collecting campaign money for.

Methinks the WPD official is just using the election campaign to collect money from the gambling lords. They're asking if the money will really reach the politician. His collector is a guy named Rene de Jesus.

There are 12 gambling lords in Manila. So, the WPD official stands to collect a total of P2.4 million. He tells the gambling lords the money is needed this week.

* * *

Two top officials concerned with taking care of arriving and departing passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport have an explanation for the airport snafu on Easter Sunday.

"There was such an unusual and unexpected number of incoming passengers that my people were caught off-guard," said Immigration Commissioner Al Fernandez.

There were not enough immigration officers to service passengers who debarked from a Northwest flight from Los Angeles via Tokyo. Arriving passengers suffered from the sweltering heat because the air-conditioning system at the Naia 1 terminal building was not working.

For his part, acting airport general manager Oscar L. Paras said that the air-conditioning system bogged down during the Holy Week. He said he was thankful this column brought the suffocating heat at the Naia 1 arrival area to his attention. The air-conditioning system has since been repaired, Paras said.

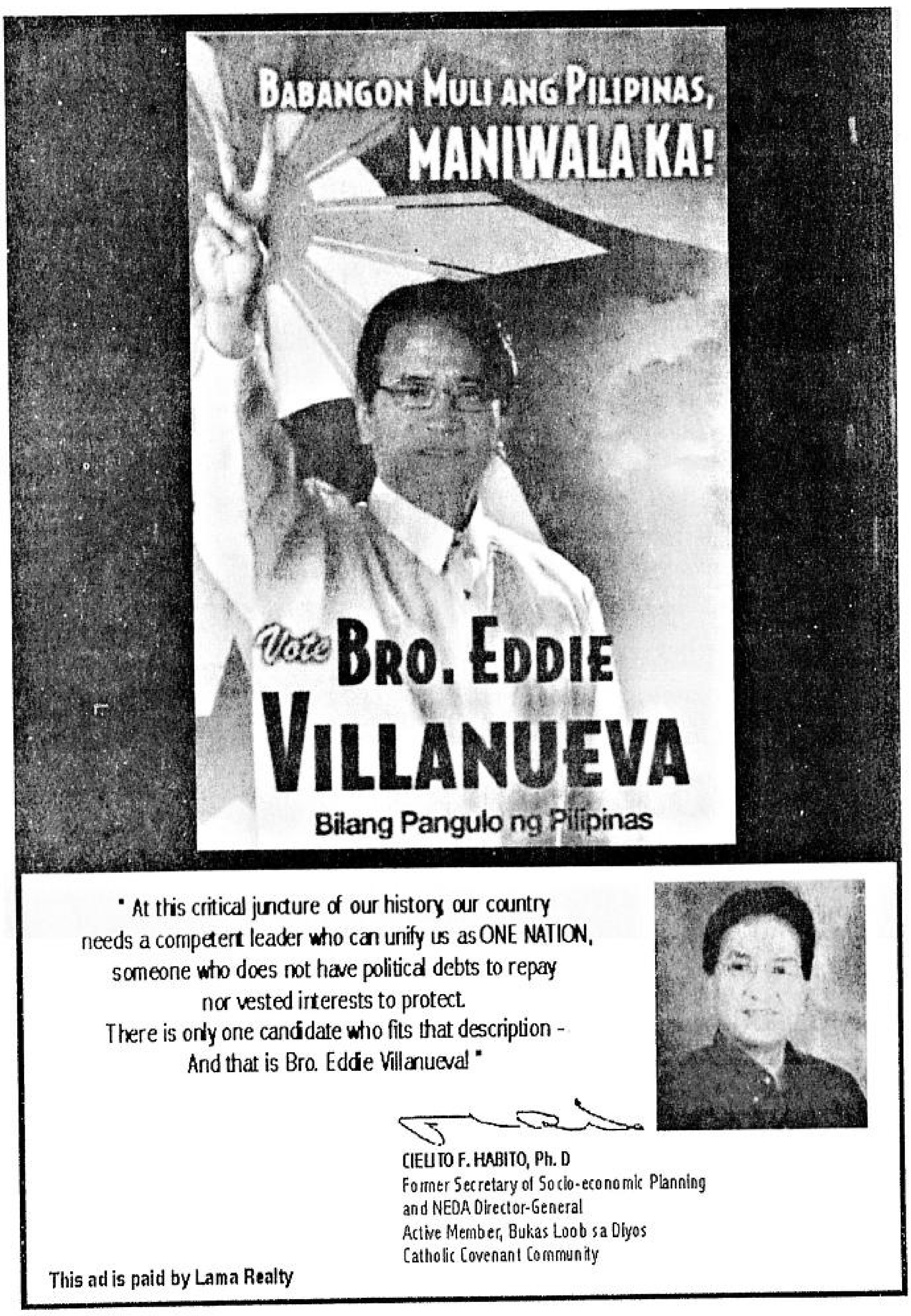
* * *

The Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Narciso Abaya, admits that enemies of the state, such as the New People's Army and the Abu Sayyaf, are better at intelligence gathering than the military.

"The enemy has reached such a level of sophistication that they have become adept in countering our (military) operations. Hence, actionable information that we used to get through deep penetration agents (DPAs) has become scarce," Abaya said.

There's only one way to defeat the enemies of state in intelligence gathering, General. Punish military commanders who spend intelligence funds for their personal use instead of paying off informants.

Many intelligence agents in the field complain of spending their own money to pay informants because their commanders have pocketed the intelligence fund.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Gov't urged: Act on water leaks

By Tina Santos

AN ENVIRONMENTAL group yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo and the two water concessionaires to address huge water leaks and illegal connections before exploring new water sources.

But Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment national coordinator Clemente Bautista was quick to add that the government should not also hasten the construction of new dams and water reservoirs.

Bautista said the government should first resolve problems on water leaks and illegal connections which are considered "non-revenue water."

He noted that as much as 60 percent of the water supply of Maynilad Water Services Inc. for Metro Manila's west zone and some parts of Cavite are lost due to leaks and illegal connections.

Manila Water's allocation, on the other hand, does not go to its customers in the east zone and some parts of Rizal, he added.

"If only the government resolves this non-revenue water, the water at Angat Dam will be managed properly and will not deplete faster," Bautista said.

He added that privatization of water resources like the Wawa and Laiban dams in Rodriguez and Tanay in Rizal, respectively, is not the answer to the water shortage Metro Manila is experiencing.

"We're not against exploring new water sources and construction of new projects, but allowing private sectors handling water sources is not advisable," Bautista said.

The Angat Dam, which supplies 97 percent of water needs of Metro Manila households, has already reached its critical level, prompting the government to stop allocating water for irrigation to the Central Luzon farmlands.

Meanwhile, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the National Water Resources Board have warned the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System for allowing the Maynilad Water Services Inc. for not having a target to bring down its non-revenue water (NRW).

"Because of the dispute between the government-led MWSS and Maynilad, there is no commitment now to bring down the NRWs," NWRB executive director Ramon B. Alikpala said yesterday. *With a report by Christine Gaylican*

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

Angara: tulong o sagabal sa opposition unity?

Si Edgardo Angara ang arkitekto sa pagkakabuo ng Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino. Pero siya rin ang dahilan sa pagkakahati ng Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, ang sarili niyang partido. Matutuloy kaya ang pagsasanib-puwersa ni FPJ at Ping kung kasama siya? Ang sagot mamayang alas-10 ng gabi, sa InqTV on ABC. (May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)

ABC

POLICE check on vehicles along Jacinto Zamora bridge leading to the oil depot in Pandacan, Manila. ERIK ARAZAS

Robbers hit bank in QC

AT LEAST five armed robbers barged inside a bank in Quezon City yesterday morning and took away some P100,000 worth of cash, police said.

Initial reports reaching the Central Police District Office (CPDO) headquarters said the robbery took place at about 10 a.m. inside the Asiatrust Bank on E. Rodriguez Avenue.

Senior Supt. Procopio Lipana, Central Police District Office-Central Investigation Unit (CPD-CIU) chief, said the unidentified robbers—four men and a woman—managed to enter the bank's premises by posing as clients.

The suspects then ordered the lone security guard and the other customers to lie on the ground and proceeded to rob the bank. *Tina Santos*

NPA rebels behind Shell attack–PNP

THE PHILIPPINE National Police is convinced "only" New People's Army rebels would pull off the attack on Shell's main office in Makati Sunday.

"They've done it in the past and it's very likely they did it again," Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, Southern Police District director, told the INQUIRER.

The NPA, through its spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, denied responsibility for the attack. But Noble said the rebels probably wanted to gain sympathy among people who oppose another hike in fuel prices.

The attack happened at 4:45 a.m. Sunday. At least three men aboard a taxi fired at the Shell building using a rifle grenade and a .45-caliber pistol. The bullets shattered a glass panel on the fourth floor.

Seemingly unfazed by the attack, Shell, Petron Corp., Caltex Phils. and new oil players Unioil, Seaoil and Flying V yesterday raised their gasoline and kerosene prices by an average of 30 centavos per liter.

Election-related

Meanwhile, Malacañang said the attack on Shell was election-related, meant to hurt public confidence in the heat of the campaign period.

"These acts of terrorism are clearly intended to influence public perceptions in the run up to the elections to instill fear or to erode confidence," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye. *Christian Esguerra*

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TENNIS: Masters Series Monte Carlo; 4 p.m.; 6 p.m.; 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.; Star Sports–Get your fill of serves and smashes as the first round continues in the land of champagne and casinos.
Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

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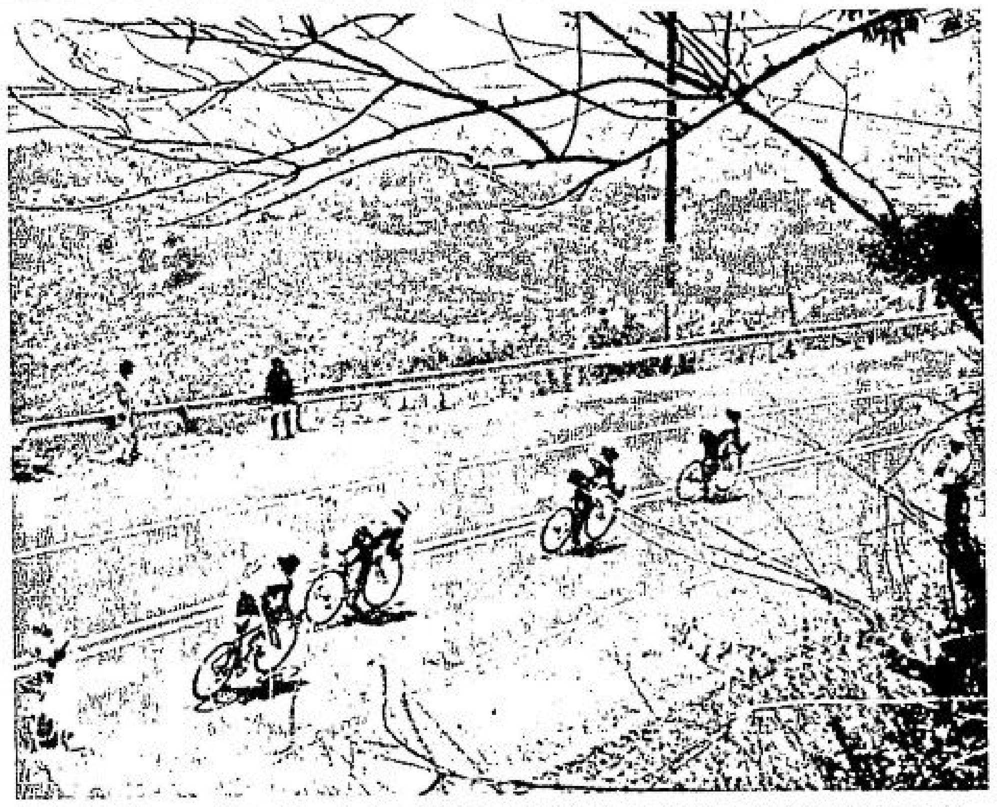


LEAD PACK negotiates the winding, hill passes of Pililia, Rizal after peeling off the main peloton that included the Tour leaders. Primero won the lap. ROMY HOMILLADA

STAGE 5

Feliciano still wears yellow; Primero No.1

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ALBERT Primero may have lived up to his name but Eric Feliciano kept the yellow jersey at least for another day.

Feliciano, winner of the third and fourth legs, became the first rider to hang on to the overall lead yesterday after the 212-kilometer Stage 5 of the Air21 Tour Pilipinas from Tagaytay City to the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City.

He crossed the finish line ninth, two minutes, nine seconds behind Primero, and retained his precarious seven-second advantage over Eusebio Quinones.

"It's very hard to defend it (overall lead)," said Patrol 117's Feliciano, the national mountain bike specialist who kept the Tour's big guns at bay during yesterday's stage. "All I'm thinking right now is how to keep it."

Feliciano was part of the 11-man lead pack that formed entering Laguna's mountainside towns, training route of the national team. The group included Primero, stage second placer Alfie Catalan, veteran Enrique Domingo and 1996 champion Victor Espiritu.

Primero, the Dole team captain, left off the cramps-stricken Catalan of Marsman Drysdale in the last 200 meters to rule the stage in five hours, 19 minutes and 41 seconds. Catalan checked in six ticks later.

With the victory, the 26-year-old rice farmer from Guimba, Nueva Ecija jumped from fifth to third place overall, slashing Feliciano's lead to one minute and 12 seconds.

Interestingly, Primero and Catalan are members of the RP Trade Team which is supported by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation. (Pagcor opted not to sponsor a team this year).

The duo held sway during the descent from Antipolo after sticking with the lead pack for the first 60 kilometers.

But Primero, who briefly lost his way in the Antipolo town proper while chasing Catalan, rode strongly along busy Commonwealth Avenue and powered around the Elliptical Circle, where traffic stood still as throngs of spectators came to cheer the cyclists.

Catalan tried to pull away when the pair reached Tanay, and Primero, whose last stage victory came in the 2002 Tour, took the wrong turn as swarms of tricycles and fans filled the streets of Antipolo. He had gone 200 meters off the actual route when he realized his mistake.

"I turned right instead of going straight ahead," Primero said in Filipino.

But he had no problem riding downhill to Marikina where he caught up with Catalan.

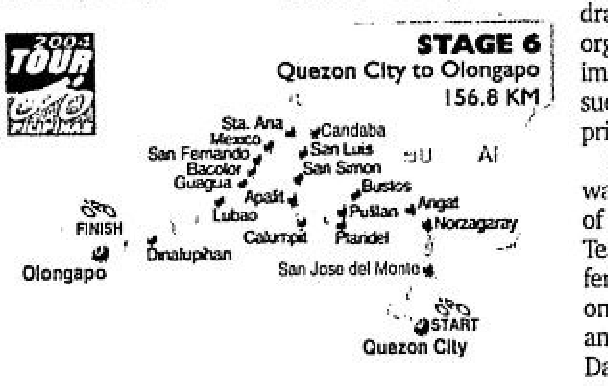
"He was already tired and suffering cramps, so I decided to take the stage win," said Primero of Catalan, nephew of 1988 Tour king Armando Catalan, who battled loose bowel movement in the first stage before leaving Naga City.

Catalan said the cramps worsened whenever he saw fit to attack.

"I decided to just tag along (the lead pack). After all we are both Pagcor riders," he said.

But the special bond between Catalan and Primero—an open secret in the Tour—has drawn the ire of organizers who immediately issued the appropriate warning.

Catalan said it was the member of the rival RP Team, led by defending champion Arnel Quirimit and Warren Davadilla, who are picking on them.



Feliciano, who won the bronze medal in the mountain biking event of the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games, chose to remain silent on what the other cyclists termed is an unholy partnership.

Race consultant Cornelio Padilla, back-to-back Tour champion in 1966-67, said the frequent changes in the overall leadership only means that "no one is riding consistently yet."

He said the riders are busy watching each other, a strategy that is "only effective if there are only a handful of worthy bidders."

"There are a lot of strong riders now. That's a flawed strategy," said Padilla, a lawyer by profession.

Second stage winner Merculio Ramos slipped to fourth place overall from third Sunday and now stood 2:25 behind; Rhyan Tanguilig also dropped to fifth from fourth, 3:06 off the pace, while Domingo is in sixth place, 4:06 adrift. Rounding out the top 10 are rookie Tomas Martines (5:17), Ronald Gorantes (6:13), Arnold Marcelo (7:21) and two-time champion Renato Dolosa (8:04).

FELICIANO/ A20

PBA player fines reach P119,000

By Musong Castillo, *Contributor*

COMMISSIONER Noli Eala has been busy cracking the whip on conduct violations in the Philippine Basketball Association, assessing a total of P119,000 in fines and penalties in the young Gran Matador Fiesta Conference.

There have been three big instances of misconduct in the tournament so far, including the post-game melee involving San Miguel's Nic Belasco and Coca-Cola import Mark Sanford less than two weeks ago.

The Commissioner's Office has refrained from divulging the amount of fines slapped on erring players and coaches since the start of the year.

The fines collected will go to the Players' Trust Fund, which helps support the academic studies of children of retired and active players in the league.

San Miguel Beer's Art Long, by far the most dominant import in the lot, has also been fined for trying to pick a fight with Sta. Lucia Realty players after their game.

Sta. Lucia coach Alfrancis Chua also did not escape the ax, drawing a hefty five-figure fine for hitting referee Joey Calungcaguin while disputing a call in the Realtors' game against the Purefoods TJ Hotdogs last March 13.

The fiery coach was fined for his "flagrant misconduct" during the game.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:45 p.m.—Purefoods vs. Sta.Lucia
7:10 p.m.—Shell vs. San Miguel

Incidentally, Chua and the Realtors shoot for a second straight win tomorrow, slugging it out with the same Tender Juicy Hotdogs team in the first of two games scheduled at the Araneta Coliseum at 4:45 p.m.

Purefoods, tied with the Realtors and idle Barangay Ginebra for last place in the double round eliminations, will be coming off three straight defeats

San Miguel tests Jameel Watkins later in the night as the Beermen try to assemble another winning streak in the 7:10 p.m. contest.

Watkins will be coming off an auspicious debut in the Beermen's victory over fancied Talk 'N Text Wednesday last week.

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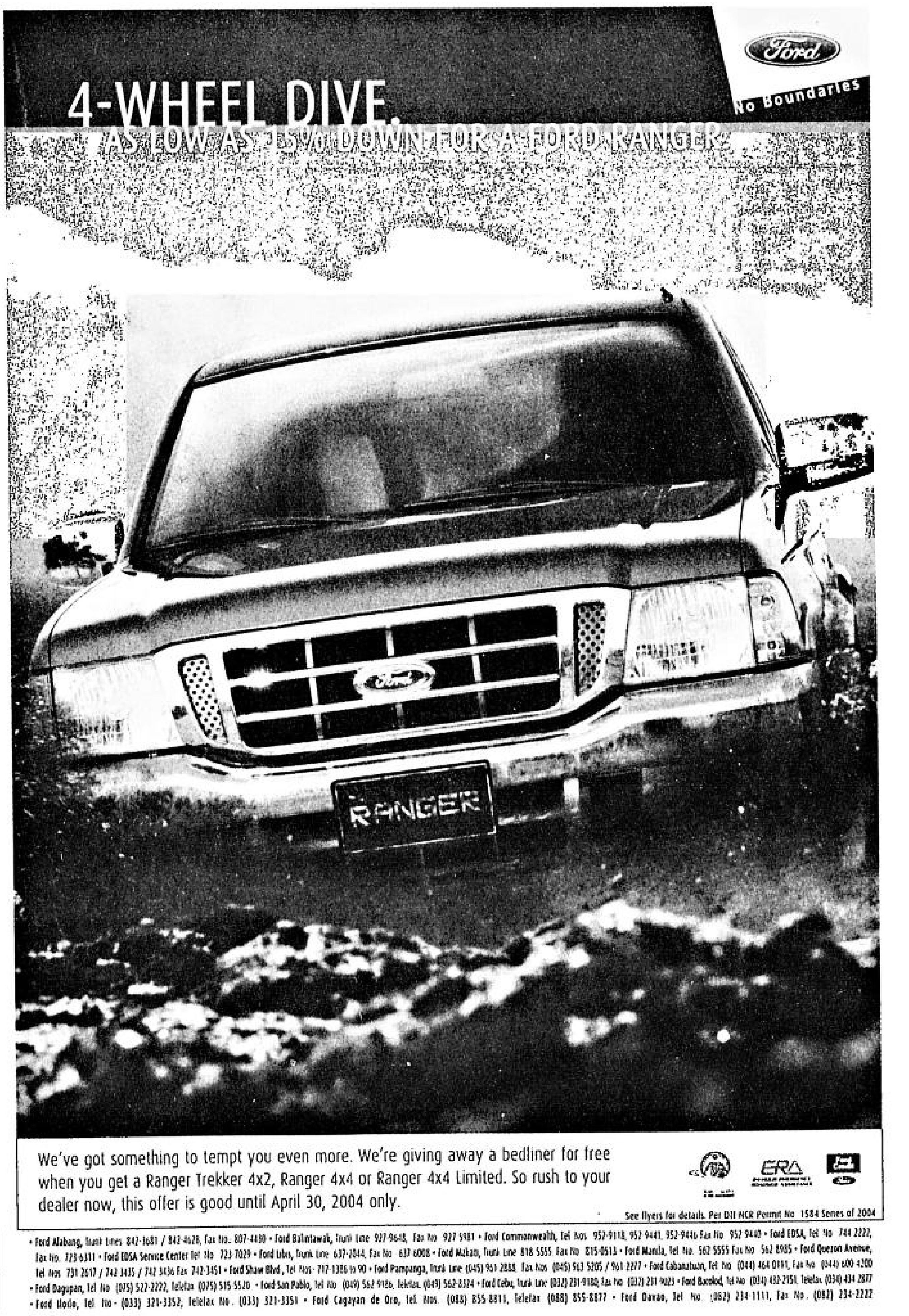

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Stage 5 Overall standings

Rider	Team	Time
R. Dolosa	(Metro Drug)	8.04 mins. behind
A. Marcelo	(Mail & More)	7:21 mins. behind
R. Gorantes	(Metro Drug)	6:13 mins. behind
T. Martinez	(Beer na Beer)	5:17 mins. behind
E. Domingo	(Postmen)	4:06 mins. behind
R. Tanguilig	(PLDT)	3:06 mins. behind
M. Ramos	(Samsung)	2:25 mins. behind
A. Primero	(Dole)	1:12 mins. behind
E. Quinones	(Purefoods)	7 secs. behind
E. Feliciano	(Patrol 117)	20 09.24

AIR21 STUDIO 23 DZMM RADYO PATROL SAIS TRENTA FedEx Mail & More TANDUAY Beer na Beer PLDT SAMSUNG PUREFOODS Dole Marsman Drysdale Medical Products Inc. METRO DRUG, INC. PATROL 117 DILG RIDERS DOLC 2004 TOUR PILIPINAS AIR21

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MANOTOC (right photo) explains the objectives of the newly launched Foundation. He later joins PGDF members and supporters (from left), Alex Montelibano, Dominic Ng of Titleist-Hong Kong, Luigi Yulo, OV Espiritu, Vicente Santos and Chris Tang of Dynamic Sports.

Manotoc unveils new vision for golf

By Jong Arcano

THE MAN who had wanted to be president of the country's golf association has instead become the leader of a foundation designed to spur the development of Filipino talents.

After shelving plans to run in the coming National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) elections, Tommy Manotoc yesterday led the launch at Wack Wack of the Philippine Golf Development Foundation, armed with a vision to provide opportunities that will help maximize the potentials of local amateurs.

"This is a commitment," Manotoc declared before a group representing various sectors of the golf community, including the influential 31-member Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines, junior golf, women's golf as well as equipment distributors.

Foremost among the PGDF's objectives, according to Manotoc, is the establishment of a three-tiered national pool of present stars that will include Juvic Pagunsan, the present and future pool members who can still be tapped to play for the national team, and those from the jungolf ranks who will be taking over in the near future.

To achieve this, Manotoc said the PGDF will be working hand in hand with organizations like the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines and Jungolf as well as coordinating bodies in key cities in the Visayas and Mindanao.

"We will forge tieups with as many clubs as possible for members of the expanded pool to be given the chance to play in any course on any day and even on weekends," Manotoc said.

Even before the launch, Manotoc had already secured pledges from corporate backers to set the PGDF's projects into motion. He mentioned Coca-Cola as an active promoter of junior golf programs in the South as well as TaylorMade and Titleist for the equipment.

He also introduced several key members of the Foundation, among them Luigi Yulo of Canlubang, Vicente Santos of the Sta. Lucia Group, Alex Montelibano and OV Espiritu. Cebu-based Montito Garcia was supposed to attend but begged off due to a pressing commitment.

Manotoc said the PGDF will try to raise funds so that Pagunsan, the country's No. 1 player, can be given the chance to compete in such prestigious events as the US Amateur and the British Amateur and improve his stock for coming national team duties.

A similar move is being hatched for the jungolfer Jayvie Agojo who will be active in campaigning abroad, particularly in the United States, this year after the completion of her high school studies.

Pledging full transparency in the PGDF, Manotoc said financial statements and activities will be regularly made public. Directors and committee members will not receive pay for their services, instead working as volunteers for "the love of golf."

Viva eyes solo 2nd; ailing Go steps down

VIVA Mineral Water's potent frontline will again be showcased when it tangles with Lee Pipes-Ateneo at 4 p.m. today in the 2004 PBL Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Led by Arwind Santos, Viva's deadly quartet includes Mark Isip, Gerard Jones and rookie Neil Raneses. They are again expected to frolic inside and out and hand the Water Force their fourth victory in five outings against the winless Eagles (0-3).

Two other lowly teams, Montaña Pawnshop (1-3) and BluStar, collide in the 2 p.m. opener, with the Jewels raring to give Coach Bong Go a fitting farewell.

Go will be calling the shots for the Jewels for the last time, citing failing health as the reason for his leaving the basketball scene.

Santos fired 27 points in Viva's 75-65 victory over Montaña last Thursday, upping his scoring average to 19.5 points per game.

He'll get plenty of support from fellow FEU Tamaraws, Isip and Jones, and Cebuano find Raneses.

Lee Pipes-Ateneo, saddled by injuries to centers Marlon Basco and Valentin Domingo, has been struggling and will need solid games from LA Tenorio, Larry Fonacier and BJ Manalo to break into the win column.

Expected to carry the scoring duties for the Jewels are frontliners Jon Dan Salvador, Al Magpayo and shooter Ismael Junio.

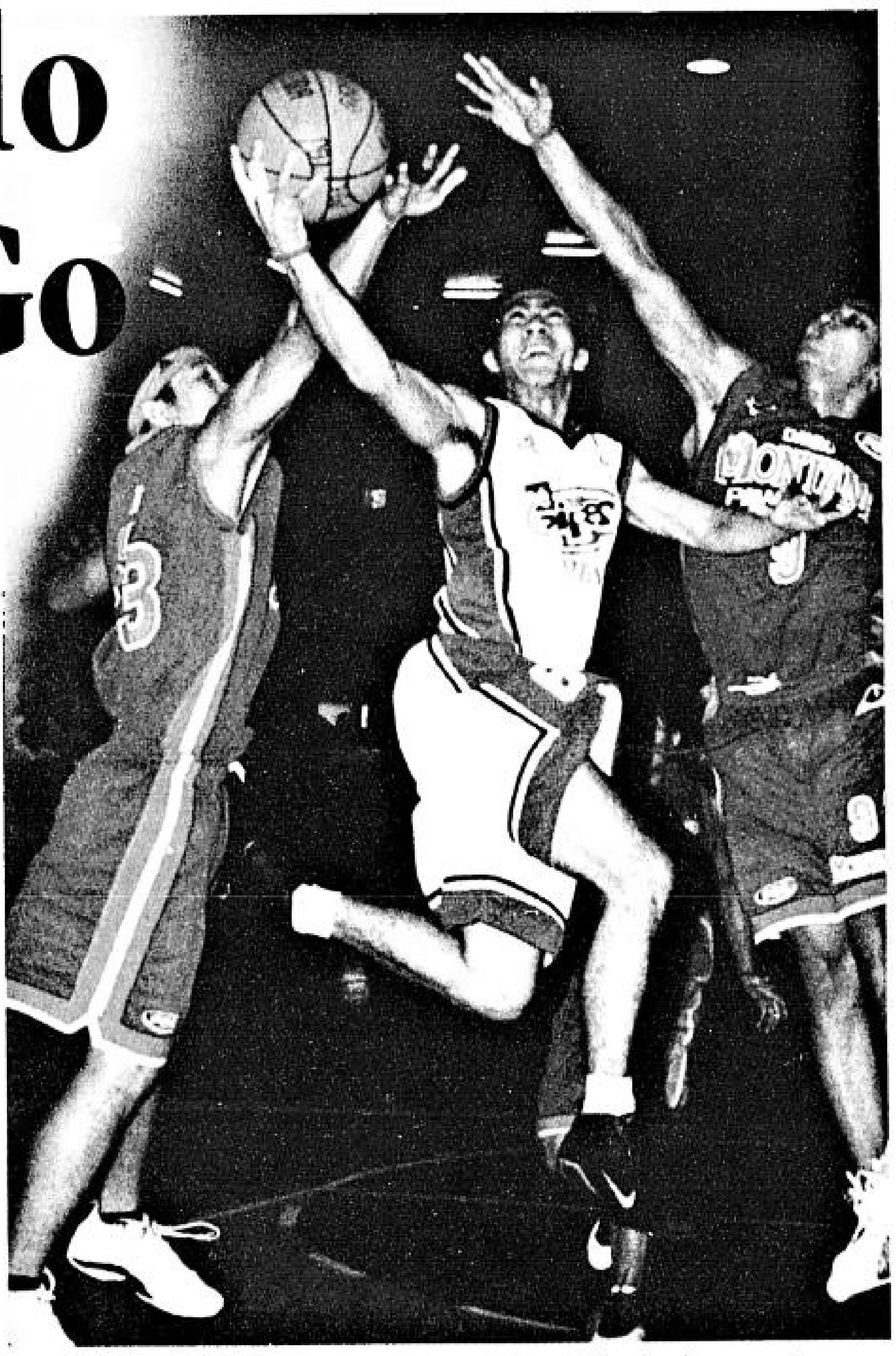
The 6-foot-4 Salvador is the Jewels' tower of power, posting double-digit averages in scoring and rebounding.

STANDINGS	W	L
Welcoat	4	0
Viva	3	1
Hapee	3	1
Sunkist	3	2
Toyota-Letran	2	2
Lee Pipes	1	2
Montaña	1	3
BluStar	0	4

GAMES TODAY (*Pasig Sports Center*)

2 p.m.—Montaña vs BluStar

4 p.m.—Viva Mineral Water vs Lee Pipes-Ateneo



TENORIO eludes Montaña's Ismael Junio and Bryan Tolentino in a recent game won by the Jewels at the Pasig Sports Center. RUDY ESPERAS

Feliciano still wears yellow; Primero No.1 in Stage 5

From page A19

Defending champion Quirimit continued to fall in the general classification and is now mired in 48th place, 37 minutes, nine seconds off the pace.

Still dangerous

With five stages already done in this year's Air21 Pilipinas Tour, 1996 champ Victor Espiritu has hardly made a noise.

And that makes him all the more dangerous, if you ask Tour veteran Enrique Domingo.

"I think he's plotting something," said Domingo, known for his sprinting prowess. "The bad thing is nobody knows for sure what it is."

Espiritu, captain of Beer na Beer, is currently ranked 21st overall, 14 minutes and 24 seconds off the pace.

When Espiritu won in 1996, he was a virtual unknown and caught everyone's attention only when he ruled the individual time trial in the mountains of Cebu province, humbling then Mountain King Carlo Guieb.

Now he has consistently shadowed the leaders, hardly noticed by the public. He refuses media interviews.

The 28-year-old Espiritu is among the few *domestiques*—riders known for their all-around ability—campaigning in the Tour.

"He can make a move in both flat and mountain stages," said Domingo.

Espiritu is the recognized leader of the Pagcor stable of riders who are competing here for different teams. The group also includes Primero and Catalan, Lloyd Reynante, Tanguilig, Gorantes and Villamor Baluyot.

PRIMERO cools off

Stage 5 Results

1. A. Primero (Dole) 5 hrs 19 mins 41 secs.

2 A. Catalan (Marsman Drysdale) 6 secs behind

3. T. Martinez (Beer na Beer) 1 min 31 secs behind; 4. V. Espiritu (Beer na Beer) same time

5. M. Ramos (Samsung) 2:04 mins behind; 6. R. Tanguilig (PLDT) same time; 7. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug) same time

8. M. Ramos (Dole) 2:09 mins behind; 9. E. Feliciano (Patrol 117) same time; 10. W. Davadilla (Purefoods) same time; 11. E. Domingo (Postmen) same time; 12. A. Marcelo (Mail and More) same time; 13. E. Quinones (Purefoods) same time; 14. S. Barnachea (Mail and More) same time; 15. G. Apolinar (Postmen) same time

16. J. Millanes (Postmen) 2:19 mins behind

17. C. Jazul (Beer na Beer) 5:04 mins behind; 18. J. Calderon (Beer na Beer) same time; 19. V. Baluyot (samsung) same time; 20. R. Dolosa (Metro Drug) same time

21. J. Guillen (samsung) 5:56 mins behind

22. A. Quirimit (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 7:10 mins behind; 23. O. Fronda (Mail and More) same time; 24. B. Ravina (VAT Riders) same time

25. R. Navarro (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 8:42 mins behind; 26. P. Manapul (Marsman and Drysdale) same time; 27. E. Onosa (Samsung) same time

28. B. Lopez Jr. (PLDT) 8:53 mins behind

29. D. Ganigan (VAT Riders) 8:58 mins behind; 30. B. Llentada (Tanduay Rhum Riders) same time; 31. J. Dasalla (PLDT) same time; 32. R. Hualda (Purefoods) same time; 33. D. Posillero (Patrol 117) same time; 34. F. Alagano (Dole) same time

35. L. Atilano (Mail and More) 10:45 mins behind

36. F. Celeste (VAT Riders) 10:52 mins behind

37. D. Maraña (Marsman and Drysdale) 10:55 mins behind

38. L. Reynante (Postmen) 11:50 mins behind; 39. R. Gorantes (Metro Drug) same time

STAGE 5 OVERALL
11. S. Barnachea(Mail and More) 8:14 mins behind
12. G. Apolinar (Postmen) 10:48 mins
13. E. Obosa (Samsung) 10:55
14. P. Manapul (Marsman Drysdale) 12:27
15. C. JAZUL (Beer na Beer) 12:28
16. V. Baluyot (Samsung) 12:30
17. W. Davadilla (Purefoods) 13:15
18. F. Celeste (Vat Riders) 13:37
19. R. Navarro (Tanduay Rhum Riders) 14:00
20. J. Millanes (Postmen) 14:09
21. V. Espiritu (Beer na Beer) 14:24
22.D. Ganigan (Vat Riders) 14:39
23. J. Calderon (Beer na Beer) 18:08
24. F. Alagano (Dole) 18:20
25. O. Fronda (Mail and More) 19:18
26. B. Ravina* (Vat Riders) 19:26
27. J. Dasalla* (PLDT) 19:26
28. D. Posillero (Patrol 117) 19:39
29. A. BENOSA* (Metro Drug) 20:13
30. L. Atilano (Mail and More) 22:34
31. O. Villanueva* (Dole) 22:59
32. G. Asiado (Patrol 117) 23:43
33. J. Guillen (Samsung) 24:16
34. A. Catalan (Marsman Drysdale) 24:42
35. S. Benito (Purefoods) 25:01
36. M. Primero (Dole) 25:36

OVERALL TEAM STANDINGS
1. Postmen, 60 hrs 37 mins 8.131 secs
2. Beer na Beer, 13 mins 25.108 secs behind
3. Samsung, 14:10.895 mins
4. Purefoods, 14:42.507
5. Dole, 15:33.975
6. PLDT, 20:11.279
7. Metro Drug, 20:18.344
8. Mail and More, 22:15.320
9. Marsman and Drysdale, 25:03.288
10. Patrol 117, 26:37.009
11. VAT Riders, 36:31.551
12. Tanduay Rhum Riders 40:17.603

ASIAN FENCING

RP bets miss Olympic berths

By Trina Ibarle

THE FIRST three Philippine bets sent to the floor suffered stinging setbacks yesterday as Armand Bernal, Joanna Franquelli and Harleen Orendain all bade goodbye to their Olympic dreams right on the first day of the Sharp 2004 Asian Fencing Championships at the Philsports Arena.

First to go was Bernal who lost to a vastly superior Kyrgyztan's Evgeniy Chigrin, 15-8, in the men's epee event of the 23-nation tourney serving as Asia's Olympic qualifier.

Women's epee bets Franquelli, a bronze medalist in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games, and Orendain followed Bernal to the exit.

Franquelli yielded a 15-7 decision to eventual women's saber runner-up Tsz Ki Chow of Hong Kong while Orendain managed to put up a semblance of a fight against Siritida Chouchokkul of Thailand before taking a 15-11 loss.

Despite the bad start, Philippine Olympic Committee president and Philippine Amateur Fencing Association head Cito Dayrit remained hopeful the country's remaining bets can make it to Athens.

Dayrit is pinning his hopes on men's saber standout Wally Mendoza and Emerson Segui (men's foil) to snag the elusive Olympic berth. Mendoza and Segui see action today.

"The competition is tough. We did not expect to come out strong today. But I'm happy with the performance of the players who fought very hard," said Dayrit.

The 5-foot-7 Franquelli, who was once a national cager, rued having been paired with a tough foe too early.

"I was thinking I could have had the chance to make it, but I was pitted early against (Chow)," said Franquelli.

Clinching a trip to Greece were Siriroj Rathprasert of Thailand, who defeated an aggressive Hassen Hassan of Kuwait, 15-13, in the men's epee final, and New Zealand's Jessica Beer, who downed another Thai, Chouchokkol, in the distaff side.

Madoka Hisagae of Japan triumphed over Chow, 15-8, in the women's saber final but both Hisagae and Chow also qualified to the Olympics as there were two slots up for grabs.

Valle Verde bet, 2 others whip rivals

VALLE VERDE'S Janina Paredes pulled off a near-flawless game to rout Sierra Bravo, 11-0, 11-0, and pace the winners in the girls' singles of the JVC 14-under Badminton Championships at the SM Megamall.

Paredes, last year's grand slam champion playing out of Our Lady of La Sallete in Bulacan, wowed the big Sunday crowd with a superb all-around game that overwhelmed Bravo.

Two other talented bets matched Paredes' performance in the event exclusively for players 14-years old and below.

Mia Villarin of Anvil and Monica Yupangco of Valle Verde also blanked their respective rivals with equally solid games.

Villarin thumped Adrienne Poblete of Manresa School and Yupangco beat Kaeshalane Theodosis.

Karyn Velez gained the easiest passage to the next round of this championship sponsored by electronics giant JVC and organized by IMG as last year's second placer scored a walkover win over Gladys Aquino.

So did Valle Verde's Lisa Encarnacion and Bulacan's Clarissa Arellano, Chona Media and Kathleen Balatbat over Ronalyn Dumaguin, Jinky Gonzaga Linda Balanza and Ashely Aoas, respectively.

Others who advanced to the next round were Danica Bolos, Jamila Cruz, Carla Lizardo, Mariano Bantug, Abigail Garcia of DLS-Zobel, Bianca Legaspi, Jacklyn Cudia and Reyne Calimlim.

Illam nines retain two Series titles

TANAUAN CITY, Batangas—Baseball teams from the International Little League of Manila (Illam) routed their rivals in a pair of sudden-death finals yesterday to keep the Big League and Junior League titles in the Little League Philippine Series at the Tanauan baseball field here.

But Nueva Ecija somehow spoiled the party for Illam, which retained two of the four championships they won last year in San Pablo City.

Pitcher Melvin Malig yielded just three hits as the National All-High School champions Novo Ecijanos dethroned defending champion Illam, 5-1, in the Senior League Division of the series.

Despite the defeat, Illam will try to shoot for its third title in the premier Little League (11-12 years old) crown on Wednesday against a still undetermined foe.

Working behind starter Christopher Concepcion, Illam blasted eliminations topnotcher Kalumpang, 14-4, to retain the Big League plum. Illam had earlier nipped Kalumpang, 12-11, to forge the winner-take-all game.

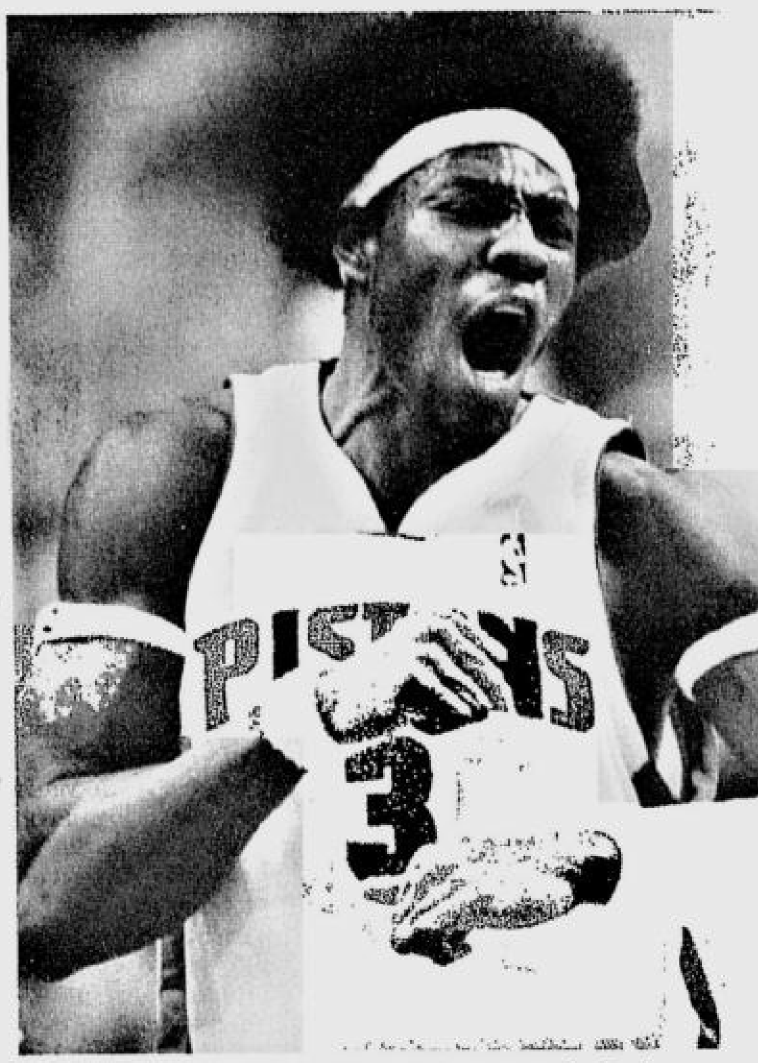
Illam blanked Makati, 11-0, in another sudden-death game to clinch the Big League Division title, after the Makati batters had forced the extra game with a 4-1 win.

The boys of Nueva Ecija Gov. Tomas Joson III scored an unearned run right in the first inning as Aldrin Mariano singled, reached third base on a throwing error by third baseman Boy Ang to first, and scooted home on a passed ball.

Champions in Little League baseball will represent the country in the Asia-Pacific tournament in Guam later this year.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Kings reign; Heat hot



BEN Wallace celebrates the Pistons' victory over the Bucks. AFP

NEW YORK—After such a disappointing regular-season finish, the Sacramento Kings needed something positive at the start of the playoffs.

They got it Sunday with a 116-105 home victory over Dallas in Game 1 of their Western Conference series. Best of all, Chris Webber, who struggled down the stretch as Sacramento blew the Pacific Division title, was the start.

Webber had 26 points and 12 rebounds, while Peja Stojakovic scored 28 points. The Kings showed they can handle the breakneck pace Dallas employs.

"We understand what's at stake," guard Doug Christie said. "We haven't been playing well lately, and if we don't play well, we'll go home. I hope we can bring the same energy night after night."

On Saturday, Webber, who missed much of the season recovering from knee surgery, and Christie spoke to their teammates, trying to motivate them for the postseason.

The Kings looked plenty motivated.

"It felt good running up and down the floor," said Webber, who endangered his gimpy knees by diving for a loose ball to set up a key fast-break score. "We just wanted to wear them down, and that's what we were able to do."

Game 2 is Tuesday night, also in Sacramento.

Dirk Nowitzki's 32 points and 13 rebounds led Dallas in the matchup of the NBA's two highest-scoring teams.

"They don't play much better than this," Dallas coach Don Nelson said. "This is one of their best games of the season, or at least since Webber has been back."

Elsewhere in series openers Sunday, it was Minnesota over Denver, 106-92; Detroit over Milwaukee, 108-82; and Miami over New Orleans, 81-79.

On Monday night, Memphis is at San Antonio, while Houston is at the Los Angeles Lakers. Both hosts lead 1-0. *AP*

Playoff results:

Detroit 108, Milwaukee 82, Detroit leads series 1-0

Sacramento 116, Dallas 105, Sacramento leads series 1-0

Miami 81, New Orleans 79, Miami leads series 1-0

Minnesota 106, Denver 92, Minnesota leads series 1-0

Cink rallies from 9 down to clinch Heritage crown

A FINAL round 64 does the trick for Cink. AFP

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina—Stewart Cink sank a birdie on the fifth playoff hole to complete the greatest final-round PGA comeback on American soil and win the Heritage Classic here Sunday.

Cink fired a 7-under par 64 final round to match fellow American Ted Purdy on 10-under 274 after 72 holes, then dueled level through four playoff holes before sinking a six-foot birdie putt to capture the $4.5-million event.

Having started the final round nine strokes off Purdy's pace, Cink took advantage of the leader's final-round 73 to produce the greatest comeback triumph in a US men's event, surpassing the old mark of eight strokes.

"Stewart shooting seven-under, man, give me a break," joked Purdy, who claimed he will win next week in Houston. "That was pretty good." The only greater triumphant rally in a US tour-recognized event was Scotsman Paul Lawrie's 10-stroke rally to capture the 1999 British Open in a playoff after Frenchman Jean Van de Velde's 72nd-hole collapse. *AFP*

Junior World qualifier blasts off today

CAVITE—One hundred eighty jungolfers from all over the country seek slots to the Callaway Junior World golf championships in San Diego, California, in the third leg of the Samsung-DHL Jungolf Tour starting today at the Sherwood Hills Golf Club and Riviera Executive courses in Trece Martirez, Cavite.

The season's most important tournament has lured juniors from as far Cebu, Bacolod and Del Monte who will mix it up with the Big City bets for the few slots at stake in six different age-group categories.

Only the top finishers in both boys and girls divisions of Class A which is for 15-17 years old, Class B for 13-14 years, Class C for 11-12, Class D for 9-10, Class E for 8-9 and Class F for 6 years and under are guaranteed to join the Philippine contingent to the Junior World this July.

Tight Junior World acceptance rules have drastically reduced the allotment of slots to participating countries. Almost 4,000 jungolfers from more than 30 countries are playing in the tourney each year.

Five local jungolfers (Dottie Ardina, Debbie de Villa, Jik-jik Abdon, Wolen Superal and Andie Unson) are actually seeded to see action in San Diego for being among the top five finishers in their respective divisions last year but they will all be gunning for the free tickets expected to be provided for the country's bets by Jungolf official carrier Philippine Airlines.

Callaway, through its local distributor, Electrobus Consolidated Inc., and Golf Pro International have joined hands to put up the exciting prize package for the top three finishers.

Jungolf president Luigi Tabuena said that the competition in all age-groups should be very tight especially with the arrival of the regional challengers.

Venus wins 1st title since 2003

NEW YORK—Venus Williams recovered from a poor first set to win her first WTA tour title in over a year by beating Conchita Martinez, 2-6, 6-2, 6-1, in the final of the Family Circle Cup in Charleston, South Carolina, on Sunday.

Williams lost her serve twice in the first set and appeared to be in trouble against the 16th-seeded Spaniard Martinez, twice winner of the event.

But Williams, the fourth-seed, took over the match in the last two sets and showed much of the poise and confidence she had before injuries slowed her down in the past year.

"The first set was a little bit shaky for me," Williams told reporters. "I had to adjust to her game." It was the American's first tournament win since February 2003 in Antwerp, Belgium. She suffered an abdominal injury soon after that success and was sidelined for a lengthy period.

Martinez, playing in her first final for four years, controlled the first set but could not match Williams's strength on long rallies as the match wore on.

Many of the top players in the field withdrew earlier in the week with injuries, including Williams' sister, Serena, who has a knee problem. *Reuters*

CHAMPION

Argentina's Juan Ignacio Chela celebrates beating Russia's Marat Safin, 6-7, 6-3, 6-3, in the Estoril Tennis Open final Sunday in Oeiras, outside Lisbon, Portugal. AP

Villamor gains second round

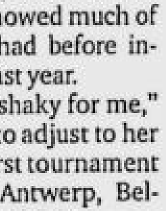
SEVENTH seed Alberto Villamor and unranked Aldrick Olivan scored similar victories yesterday to forge a second-round showdown in the boys' 12-under division of the Philta Age-Group Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Villamor rallied past Rex Brinas, 3-6, 6-3, 6-1, while Olivan survived John Maneja.

In other matches, second seed Kim Ivor Saraza blasted Jacob Lagman, 6-0, 6-0; No. 4 Joseph Baldonado defeated Noel Agra, 6-1, 6-1; No. 5 Juan Gabriel Pena demolished Yuchi Fukushima, 6-0, 6-0; No. 8 Tim Polero clobbered Fredmore Dominisac, 6-0, 6-1; and Jose Lorenzo Ferrer downed Pemrik Alina, 6-3, 6-1.

In the unisex 10-under division, No. 5 Tim Polero whipped Jurence Mendoza, 6-1, 6-0; No. 6 Angelo Joseph Rivero trounced Tsutana Fukushima, 6-0, 6-1; No. 7 Dheo Talatayod blanked Jeremy Carreon, 6-0, 6-0, and Jasmine Tan Ho outclassed Lorenzo Mapili, 6-1, 6-0, to advance in the second round.

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

AL S. Mendoza observed his birthday leave yesterday. His column, "Spectator," will resume on Thursday, April 22.

Haas stuns Roddick, cops plum

HOUSTON, Texas—Germany's Tommy Haas captured his first ATP title since 2001, defeating American top seed Andy Roddick, 6-3, 6-4, here Sunday to win the $400,000 United States Clay Court Championship.

Haas, who missed all of last year following right rotator cuff surgery in December of 2002, won $52,000 and his first ATP title since Stuttgart in 2001. It was his sixth ATP title and his first on clay.

"I am glad to win my first title since coming back," he said. "I didn't expect it to happen this fast." The 26-year-old German, who had not reached an ATP final since Rome two years ago, rose to 4-0 overall against Roddick, snapping the American's 12-match winning streak. *AFP*

Maradona critical after heart failure

MARADONA a few hours before he was hospitalized AFP

BUENOS AIRES—Argentine football legend Diego Maradona, who has a history of drug abuse, was in intensive care in a local hospital early Monday after suffering acute heart failure.

Dozens of his fans held a vigil in front of The Swiss-Argentine clinic, praying for their star.

The hospital said in a statement that the 43-year-old former captain of the Argentine national team was unable to breathe by himself.

His doctor, Alfredo Cahe, told reporters that Maradona's reaction over the next 24-48 hours would be crucial to his recovery chances.

Buenos Aires swirled with rumors about the cause of the illness, with the TN television channel saying Maradona had a drug overdose.

Maradona, who is considered one of the greatest footballers of all time, has been battling drug addiction for years. He was suspended while playing in the Italian championship in the 1990s after testing positive for cocaine.

The Buenos Aires clinic said Maradona was admitted after suffering "congestive heart failure" caused by high blood pressure. *AFP*

SPORTSWATCH

Taiwanese ends Bata's winning run

HONG KONG—Efren "Bata" Reyes' streak of victories on the San Miguel Asian 9-ball Tour ended Sunday night when he lost to Chinese Taipei's Yang Ching Shun of Taiwan, 11-8, in the semifinal round of the $50,000 event at the Hong Kong Football Club's sports hall here. The setback snapped Reyes' run of 13 wins in the circuit that netted two leg crowns in Singapore and Vietnam. Yang went on to take the third leg crown at the expense of countryman Hsia Hui Kai, 11-9. Yang won $10,000 while Hsia and Reyes got $5,000 each.

Ford Lynx Cup launching April 30

THE 2004 TRS Ford Lynx Cup will be formally launched in an all-night party at the Manila Speedzone in Fort Bonifacio on April 30. This year's event, organized by the Tuason Racing School, is one of the most exciting and competitive circuit-racing series as competitors will drive identically prepared Ford Lynx touring cars. Registration for the Lynx Cup launch is scheduled for 7 p.m. followed by dinner, the presentation of the event and a time trial kart competition for VIPs and the media at the Speedzone circuit. DJ Steve Mills will host the party that follows the competition. Addict Mobile subscribers will get discounts and free drinks during the launch. Those who text TR<space>news to 382 will get two free bottles of Red Horse Beer. The TRS Ford Lynx Cup is co-presented by Addict Mobile and Standard Insurance.

Eastridge hosts Senior tournament

THE SECOND bimonthly golf tournament for the year under the auspices of the Federation of Philippine Senior Golfers Inc. will be held on Friday at the Eastridge Golf Club. It is hosted by the Fort Bonifacio Senior Golfers Association, Founders Chapter, and Eastridge seniors. At least 100 senior golfers from 21 affiliated chapters of the federation will compete for individual honors in five age groups under the blind Callaway handicapping and scoring system. In the team competition, it will be five-to-play, four-to-count scheme, according to federation president emeritus Frisco F. San Juan. Tee time starts at 6:30 a.m., with the first hour allotted to pre-registered participants on a semi-shotgun starting format. Meanwhile, it was also announced that the federation is now accepting applications for a limited number of allocations for entries in this year's World Senior Golf Championships, slated on Aug. 21 to 26, at the Pala Mesa Resort Club in Fallbrook, California, 45 miles north of San Diego.

Yang President's Cup champion

GREG Yang emerged as the overall champion in the 7th President's Cup Golf Tournament held March 20 at the Midlands Golf Club, shooting a 3-over-par 75. Danny Yu bagged the 1st Division, with Chris Junro Mamaril as 1st runner-up and Oliver Gan as 2nd runner-up. The 2nd Division was won by Steve Gan, while Francis Celones and Ding Santico were declared 1st and 2nd runners-up. respectively. Arnel Cansana clinched the 3rd Division, with Sergio Yu and 10-year-old Michael Limandibrata as 1st and 2nd runner-up, respectively. Marietta Chan lorded the Ladies Division, with Connie Mamaril as 1st runner-up and Agnes De Kok as 2nd runner-up. Ike Yusingco led the Guest Division, followed by Heraldo Spies and Rupert Bayacot as 1st and 2nd runners-up, respectively The event was held in honor of Club President Jerry Tiu. For membership inquiries and other information about Highlands developments, call 6872885.

Women's in Construction Golf Cup

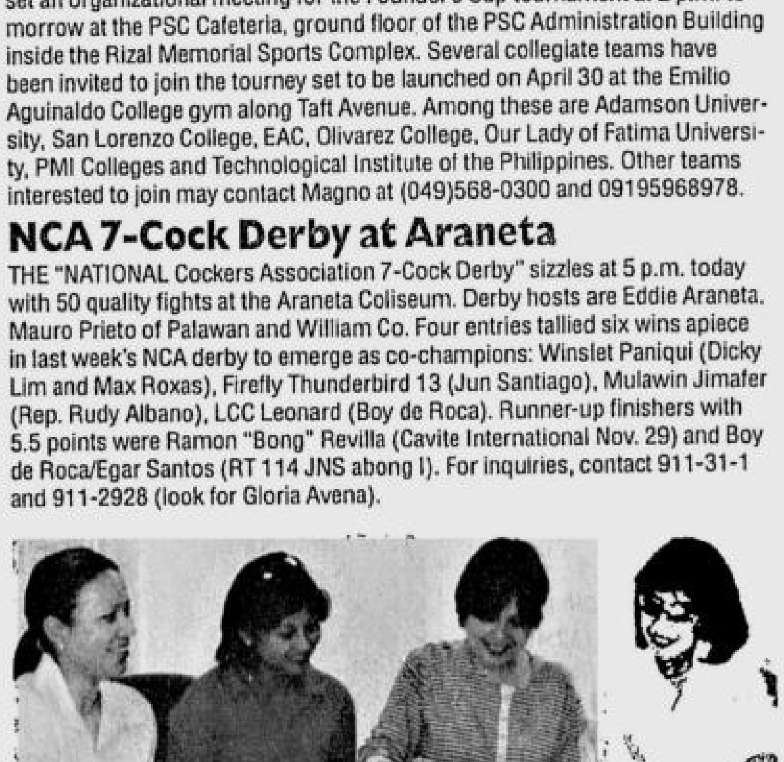
THE WOMEN'S in Construction's Amateur Golf Cup will be held today at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. WIC is a non-profit organization advocating the promotion of excellence through the active involvement of women in issues, training and standard setting relevant to the needs of the construction industry and its allied businesses. The ceremonial tee at 8 a.m. will be done by Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando, one of WIC's founding members. Tournament tickets are available at WIC secretariat (6352669 or 7440365) and Wack Wack.

NBDL organizational meeting set

NATIONAL Basketball Development League (NBDL) president Ted Magno has set an organizational meeting for the Founder's Cup tournament at 2 p.m. tomorrow at the PSC Cafeteria, ground floor of the PSC Administration Building inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex. Several collegiate teams have been invited to join the tourney set to be launched on April 30 at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym along Taft Avenue. Among these are Adamson University, San Lorenzo College, EAC, Olivarez College, Our Lady of Fatima University, PMI Colleges and Technological Institute of the Philippines. Other teams interested to join may contact Magno at (049)568-0300 and 09195968978.

NCA 7-Cock Derby at Araneta

THE "NATIONAL Cockers Association 7-Cock Derby" sizzles at 5 p.m. today with 50 quality fights at the Araneta Coliseum. Derby hosts are Eddie Araneta. Mauro Prieto of Palawan and William Co. Four entries tallied six wins apiece in last week's NCA derby to emerge as co-champions: Winslet Paniqui (Dicky Lim and Max Roxas), Firefly Thunderbird 13 (Jun Santiago), Mulawin Jimafer (Rep. Rudy Albano), LCC Leonard (Boy de Roca). Runner-up finishers with 5.5 points were Ramon "Bong" Revilla (Cavite International Nov. 29) and Boy de Roca/Egar Santos (RT 114 JNS abong I). For inquiries, contact 911-31-1 and 911-2928 (look for Gloria Avena).



HOLE-IN-ONE PRIZE

A Ford Escape will be at stake for a hole-in-one in the Master Challenge annual golf tournament set April 30 at the Manila Southwoods Golf & Country Club in Carmona, Cavite. Shown during the contract signing are Cherry Ramirez (2nd from right), Ford Philippines AVP for corporate & Agreement Affairs; Lilia Aaren Patarso, Ford Philippines VP; Beachie Abiera, MSGCC Ladies Chapter president, and Connie Camps, MSGCC Ladies Chapter treasurer.

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5 **MASIKIP SA DIBDIB** 10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7 35, 9 50
6 **TAKING LIVES** 10 35, 12 50, 3 05, 5 20, 7 35, 9 50
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3 **TAKING LIVES** 10 10, 12 25, 2 40, 4 55, 7 10, 9 40
4 **TWISTED** 11.00, 1.10, 3 20, 5.30, 7 40, 9 50
5 **PETER PAN** 11.30, 2 00, 4 30, 7 00, 9.40
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4 **PETER PAN** 10 25, 1 05, 3 15, 6 25, 9.05
5 **TAKING LIVES** 12 05, 2 15, 4 25, 6 40, 9.00
6 **ACACIA** 11.00, 1 00, 3 00, 5.00, 7 00, 9 00
7 **PAYCHECK** 10 25, 1 05, 3 45, 6 25, 9 05
8 **MASIKIP SA DIBDIB** 10 40, 2 15, 4 50, 7 25, 10 00

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5 **PAYCHECK** 11 45, 1 55, 4 05, 6 15, 8 30
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Preposterous

From page A26

phy's "Home Along Da Airport" was to be axed after the comedian actively campaigned for presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

"It cannot be denied that GMA 7 is one of ABS-CBN's competitors in the broadcast industry. Thus, it is understandable for GMA 7 to believe that it will benefit from making reports that will put ABS-CBN or its management in a bad light. However, GMA 7 should be reminded that its primary concern should be its responsibility to give the public true, accurate and impartial reports, and not its own selfish interests," said ABS-CBN in its letter to the NTC.

GMA also reported, according to ABS-CBN, that the planned cancellation of Dolphy's show was part of a deal allegedly struck by the Lopezes with Malacañang in exchange for the government decision to take over Maynilad Water Services Inc.

The NTC asked GMA president and chief executive officer Felipe Gozon to reply to the allegations.

"The Commission hereby request for your comment/s relative to the subject complaint noting that the same may be an apparent violation of the Television Code, specifically B2 and B3.1 of the Program Standards on News and Public Affairs," said NTC chair Ronald Solis in his letter last week to Gozon.

The NTC also asked GMA's Gozon to provide the Commission taped copies of the cited news programs so it could study the charges made by ABS-CBN.

Enjoying . . .

From page A23

ries *wakasan*. That's also why I don't enjoy our sitcoms, which drag on too long. What I do like are the swift punchlines of Pinoy gag shows like 'Bubble Gang' and 'Ispup.' What we truly excel in, however, are lifestyle programs and talk shows.

"Finally, I mourn the demise of two channels: The local UHF channel, CTV 31, carried an impressive roster of films. I was 'initiated' by this channel. Its library consisted of high-grade films by **Akira Kurosawa, Ingmar Bergman, Roman Polanski, Jean-Luc Godard, Francois Truffaut, Federico Fellini and Alfred Hitchcock.**

And TNT (later TCM) was my pick as the best of all the scheduled movie channels. Its movies were mesmerizing, magical. There simply is no excuse for us to miss out on those MGM and Warner classics just because Ted Turner's profits from TNT disappoint him.

"P.S. : In 1998, **Mel Tobias** was supposed to come out with a compilation of "100 Acclaimed Filipino Movies." Whatever happened to it? (NUT'S NOTE: The book did not come out. Mr. Tobias sent me a copy.) (*To be concluded.*)

Enjoying 'Oprah' three times a day

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

OUR occasional articles on **Oprah Winfrey**'s weekday TV show have elicited a number of queries about the program's local viewing schedules. Well, we have viewed the talk show three times in one day—at 9 a.m. on Star World, 1 p.m. again on Star World, and 10:30 p.m. on Studio 23.

On a good day, we get to view three interesting telecasts on different topics. Some months ago, there were too many replays, which eventually dampened our enthusiasm for the program. Of late, however, we have been getting fewer replays, and that's all to the good.

A recent episode was particularly interesting not only because of its topic (oral sex among US teens and adolescents), but also because it tested the production's ability to handle such a delicate subject for the mass TV audience.

Happily, the show passed the test with flying colors. It began with a clear warning about the sensitive nature of its material, and urged parents to supervise their children as they viewed the telecast.

Even more productively, it encouraged parents to discuss the topic with their adolescent kids after watching the program, to discourage them from joining the alarming trend, which has been rapidly increasing in popularity in the past couple of years.

Best of all, the production kept its focus without watering down the problem—a difficult balancing act all around. Kudos to Oprah and her crew, now nearing their 20th year of telecasting. All that experience shows.

Feedback

MORE from Ms **Bernadette Cortez** of Angeles, Pampanga: "Other cable channels and shows worth noting: For those with a proclivity for appreciating or creating beauty, the Lifestyle Network offers some interesting programs.

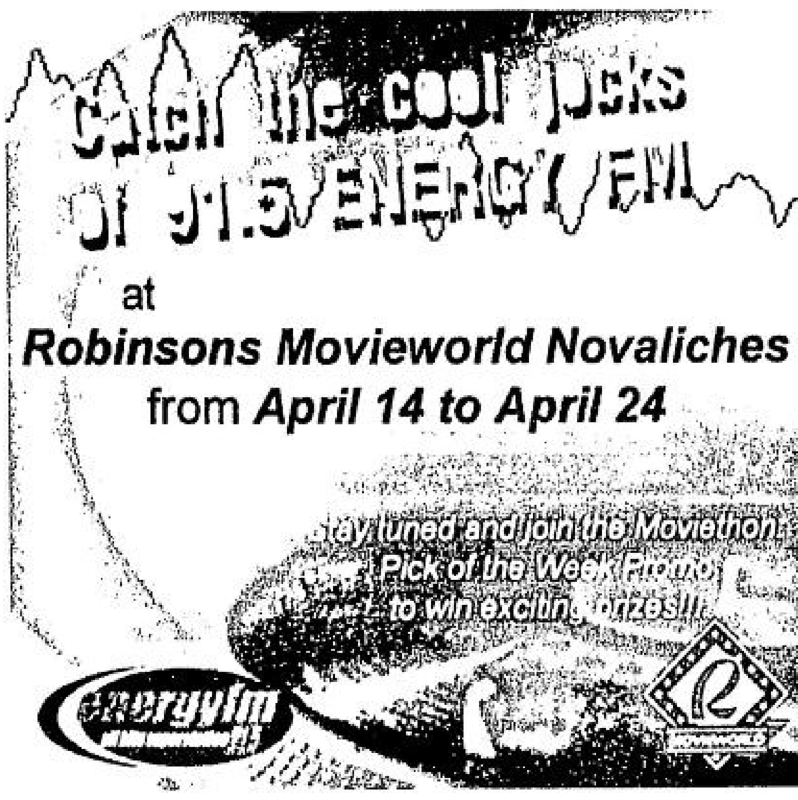
"I watch the decorating shows ('Shabby Chic' is a favorite) and the fashion and beauty programs, like 'The Look for Less' and 'Glow' to help train my eye, so I learn how to buy good items minus the hefty price tags. The cooking shows ('Hot Off the Grill,' '30-Minute Meals') are another addiction.

"Star Movies Mandarin has gone exclusive to Hong Kong movies. My favorites are 'Chunking Express,' 'Eat Drink Man Woman' and 'The Wedding Banquet.' I have also enjoyed watching 'Painted Faces' (reminiscent of 'Cinema Paradiso'), the unauthorized biography of **Jackie Chan**, 'Yesteryou, Yesterme and Yesterday' (like 'Bagets') and 'Iceman Cometh' (a rollicking, Oriental 'Back to the Future'). But I terribly miss those years when this channel was truly global.

"Star Movies International is, in my opinion, the best of the scheduled movie channels. This is where you find winners of prestigious festivals that aren't released commercially in the Philippines.

"For years now, our local TV programming has been focused on soaps. I have never liked them because I am impatient—I like my sto-

ENJOYING/A22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TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
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ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
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ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	LIGAYA / NANABIK
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REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

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A	ITLOG
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C	

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SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
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CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	ACACIA
CINEMA-2	PUNLA
CINEMA-3	UNINVITED
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
CINEMA-6	SORUM
CINEMA-7	NANANABIK
CINEMA-8	VENUS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PAYCHECK
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PETER PAN
CINEMA-12	TAKING LIVES
CINEMA-14	TWISTED
CINEMA-15	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	SCOOBY DOO 2
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	HIDALGO
CINEMA-4	GRUDGE 2

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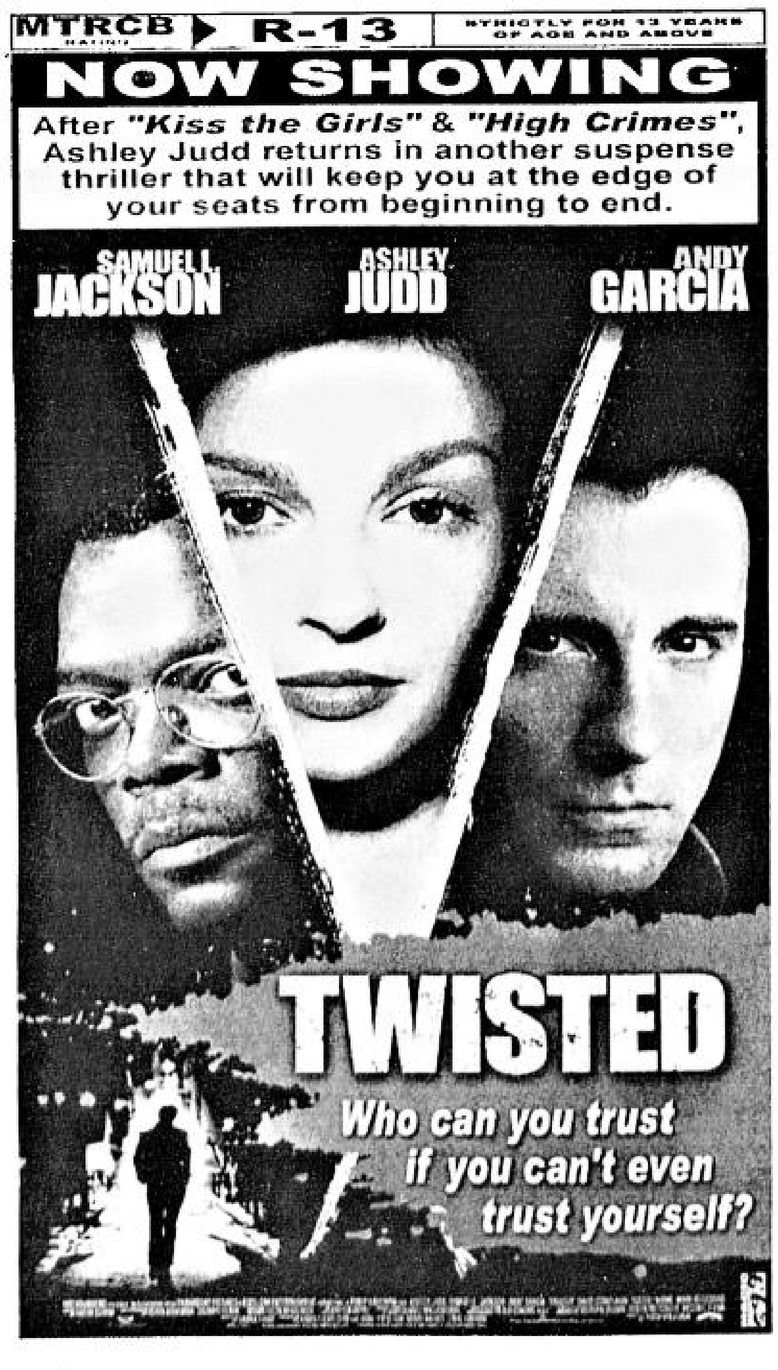
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4 GOLD (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	TWISTED
6 GOLD (SDDS)	TAKING LIVES
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	MISSING
8	BOOBITA ROSE
9	ACACIA
10	PETER PAN

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3 (DOLBY)	TAKING LIVES
4 (DOLBY)	PETER PAN

Masagana CINEMA
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1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	TWISTED
3	ACACIA

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2	RESERVE
3	TAKING LIVES BOOBITA ROSE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	TWISTED
5	

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2	BOOBITA ROSE
3	TWISTED
4	PETER PAN
5	PAY CHECK
6	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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2	SCOOBY DOO-2

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Centre Plaza Cinema
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2	GOTHIKA

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	MASIKIP
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

5	RESERVE
6	
7 (DTS)	
8 (SDDS)	
9 (DOLBY)	

Gotesco Grand Central
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1	TAKING LIVES
2	PETER PAN
3	BOOBITA ROSE
4 (SDDS)	TWISSTED
5	PAY CHECK
6 (DOLBY)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
7 (DTS)	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
8	VENUS
9	ACACIA

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1	RESERVE
2 (SDDS)	
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2	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 (DTS)	TAKING LIVES
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3	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4	PETER PAN

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2	PAYCHECK
3	TWISSTED
4	BOOBITA ROSE
5	TAKING LIVES

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2	ACACIA

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4 (SDDS)	PAYCHECK
5 (DTS)	PASSION OF CHRIST
6	PETER PAN
7	TAKING LIVES

Jade Cinema
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2	BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DTS ES)	PASSION OF CHRIST
4	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Cine Nepo
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1	BOOBITA ROSE
2	PAYCHECK
3 (DOLBY)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 (DTS)	PASSION OF CHRIST

Cine Nepo
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2	ACACIA
3 (DOLBY)	PAY CHECK
4	50 FIRST DATE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
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2	PAYCHECK
3 (DTS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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3 (DOLBY)	PAY CHECK
4	PETER PAN

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2 (DOLBY)	PETER PAN
3 (DTS)	PAY CHECK
4	PASSION OF THE CHRIST

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1	50 FIRST DATE
2	GRUDGE-2
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1	HAUNTED OFFICE
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4 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO-2

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3	BOOBITA ROSE

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1	GRUDGE-2
2	50 FIRST DATE
3 (DTS)	SCOOBY DOO-2
4 (DOLBY)	BOOBITA ROSE

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2	THE GRUDGE-2
3	HIDALGO
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2	KARIBAL

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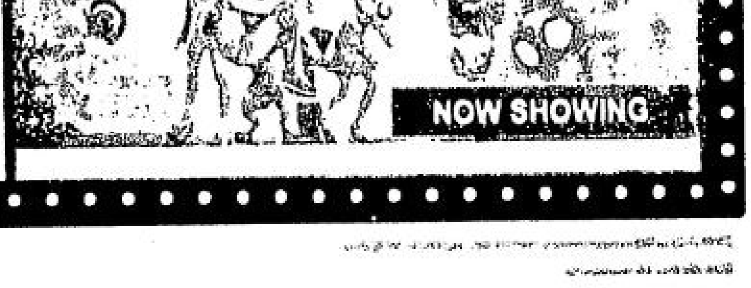

Hip hop heads must stand up to fake jocks

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

GUESS who is this young and very popular singer, who is supposedly the current boytoy of a well-respected director. In show biz circles such liaisons are nothing new. I just wonder how the string of pretty young things linked to the singer will take it. He seems like an open-minded guy so I guess he's one who would just go with the flow.

***

I had a blast at the cocktail party of Le Club (The French Business Association of the Philippines) at Dusit Hotel with *ma cherie* angel **Arabelle Jimenez** of Ecrit Com. Mingling with the French community was a welcome respite from my show biz world. I enjoyed brushing up on my rusty French. Thanks to all of them especially to Le Club's lovable director **Henri Ortigas** for making me feel instantly at home. The *tres gentil directeur* of Alliance Francaise told me that he is setting up a Filipino fair in A.F. Paris which will run for several weeks. **Chin-Chin Gutierrez** and **Joey Ayala** are among the local artists who will grace the event. Isn't it ironic that sometimes it takes a foreigner to appreciate our own treasures? *Vive La France et Le Philippines!*

***

I GOT to meet **Kaye Palomares** (who has a love child with **Jericho Rosales** named **Santino**). It's not hard to see why Echo fell for her although they have parted ways already. Kaye could pass for a movie star but she opts to lead a private life.

"It's hard enough already when I have to sign something in a store and people automatically ask me if I'm Echo's wife when they see my name. You know how the Pinoy mentality is *'pag may anak kayo para na rin kayong mag-asawa*. So sometimes I just invent a name when I sign receipts so there will be less hassles."

Kaye harbors no bitterness towards Echo. They have remained friends. Echo is no absentee father to Santino. To protect their *unico hijo*, the couple agreed not to grant television interviews about their relationship.

Lately, rumors have been spreading that Kaye is heavy with Echo's second baby.

"That's not true. Besides after Echo, I have no plans of having a boyfriend again. My son is quite possessive. He wants to be a surfer someday."

Other women who also have love children with celebrities could learn from Kaye. They should stop badmouthing the father of their babies. A ruined reputation would only boomerang on their poor innocent kids someday.

Reader's corner

A READER reacted to my item about the rap album that **Carlos Agassi**'s camp wants to ban from the market because it contains two songs that uses his name (in vain?). Rap is all about word play so Carlos should just take it at face value. Besides, he hosts a show that plays pranks on celebrities in the spirit of fun ("Victim"). Therefore, he should just be as game as his star victims. Be that as it may, Dollywood is open to Carlos' side for the sake of fairness.

"If Carlos Agassi thinks he has any standing in the hip hop community, (obviously he should think so because he proclaims himself a rapper and he releases rap albums) he should refrain from committing such cowardly acts as hiding behind his label and pulling industry strings to 'boycott' **Arbie Won**'s album. Hip hop (rap, which is one if its elements) has always been a vehicle of mobilization against the mainstream (although today's commercialization of the culture has been degrading its roots), and for a fluke, pardon me, 'rap artist' to rely on the industry to confirm his credibility to the masses by filibustering a respected dj/producer's work is an outrage—especially to true hip hop heads.

"Since rap's inception, battling has always been an important aspect of this respective element. In the '80s, **Kool Moe Dee** and **Grandmaster Busy Bee** squared off on the sound stage; as well as the **Real Roxanne** versus **Roxanne Shante**, **Boogie Down** versus **MC Shan** and **Marley Marl**. Battling continued in the '90s with Kool Moe Dee versus **LL Cool J**, LL versus **Cannibus**, **Common** verses **Ice Cube**. Today, it still remains an important facet of rap—**Jay** verses **Nas**, **Game** verses **Joe Budden**—and the list goes on. My point is, battling is a method and an opportunity for an MC to improve his skills (as long as its kept friendly and on 'wax'). A true MC wants to be the best and respected among his/her peers.

"So if Carlos Agassi's attempts at an industry shakedown prevails, the very foundation of rap and hip hop as a culture is compromised in the Philippines. A slippery slope effect might come into play. Young and up and coming MCs would no longer feel that battling is a true testing ground for props in the rap world. Instead, they may play Carlos Agassi and cater to the needs and wants of their label in order to possess the leverage to 'quiet' those who are 'calling them out'. Now what will become of hip hop? I understand that hip hop culture in the Philippines is still young and growing.

"But in order for hip hop in this wonderful country to not be tainted by individuals such as Carlos Agassi, hip hop heads must stand up to fake jocks and MCs must continue to call the posers out on the real test of skill—on the mic'.

"Peace and love."

Lojic

For feedback e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

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PG-13

2 PAY CHECK
12:05, 2:45, 5:25
8:05, 10:45
PG-13

3 PETER PAN
11:20, 1:40, 4:00
6:20, 8:40, 10:55
GP

4 TAKING LIVES
11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00
R-18

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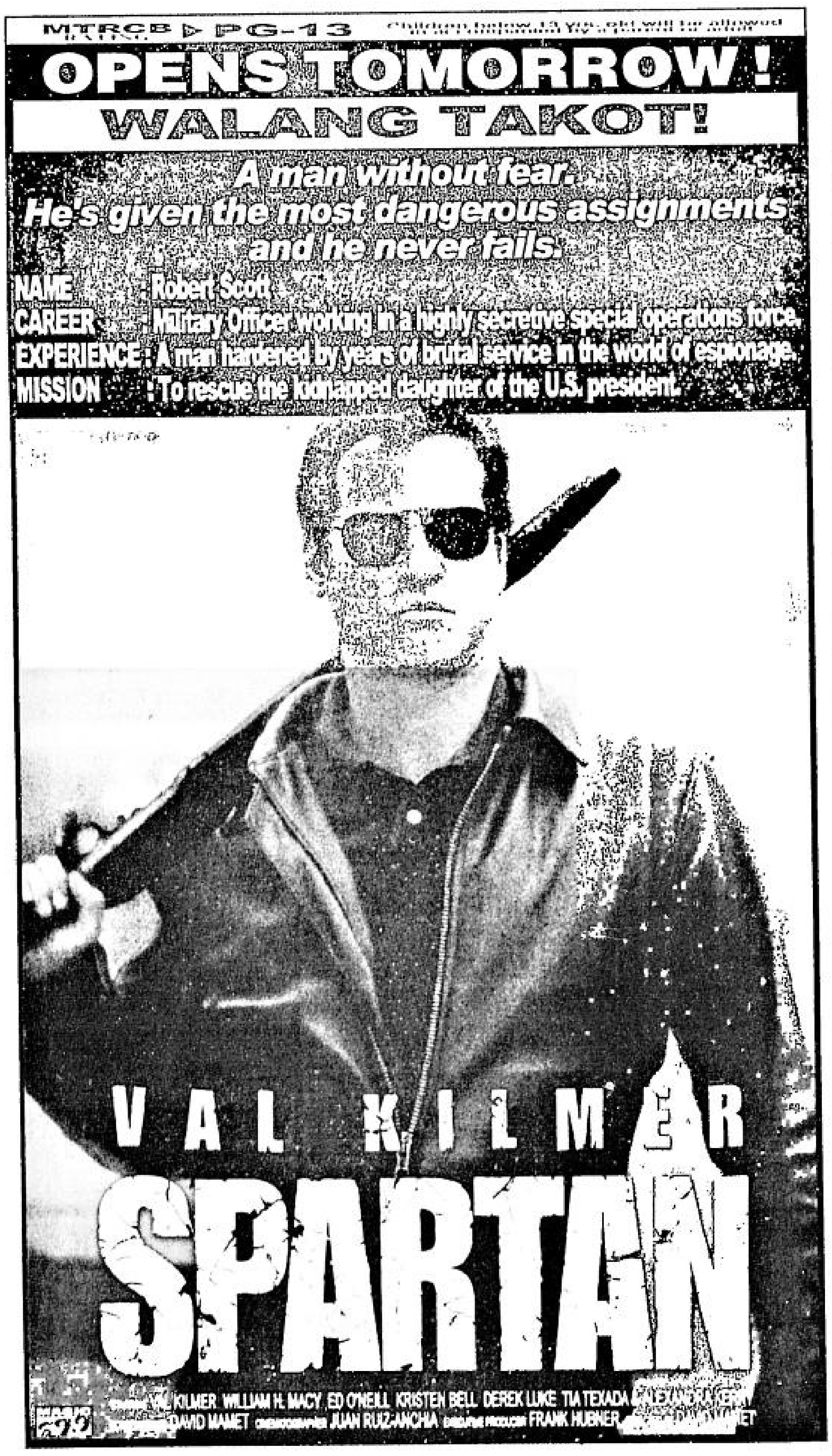

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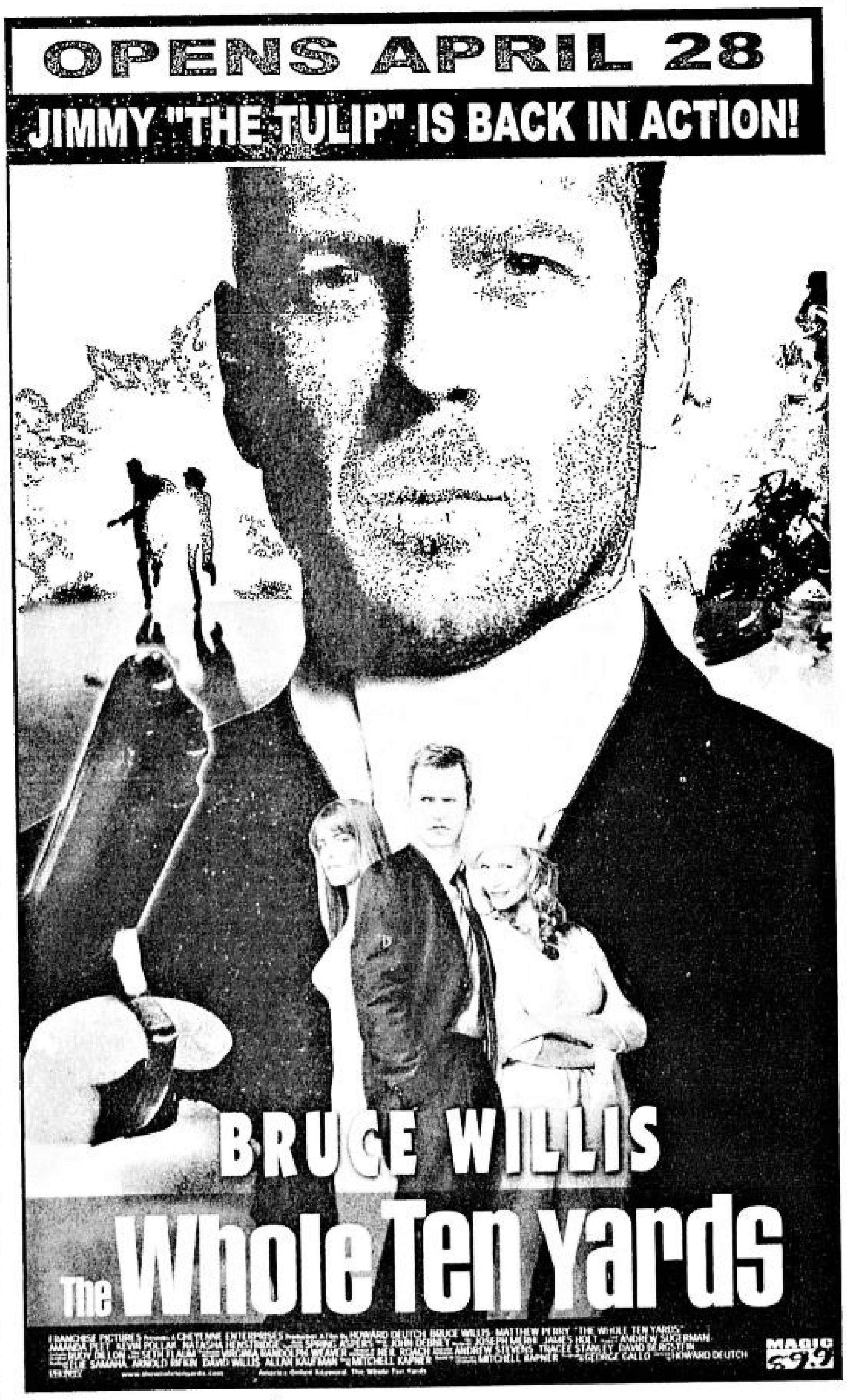

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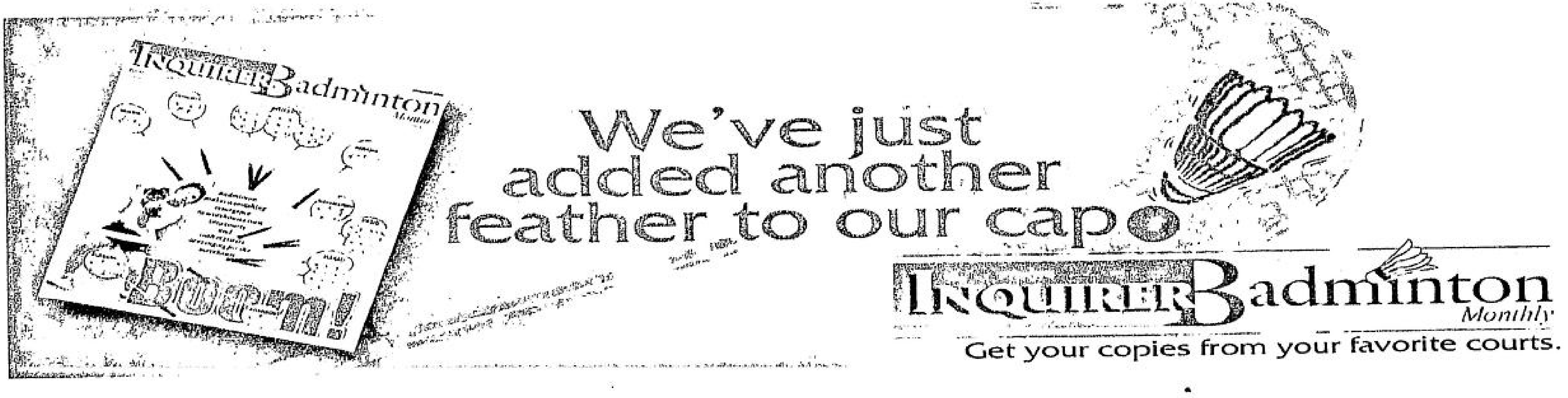

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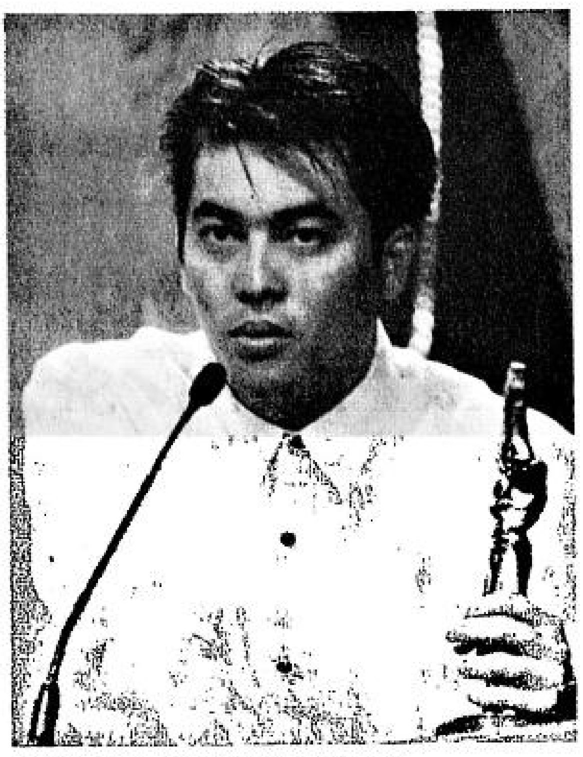


MANALO: Best Actor for 'Bayaran'

RODRIGUEZ: 'Magaling naman ako.'

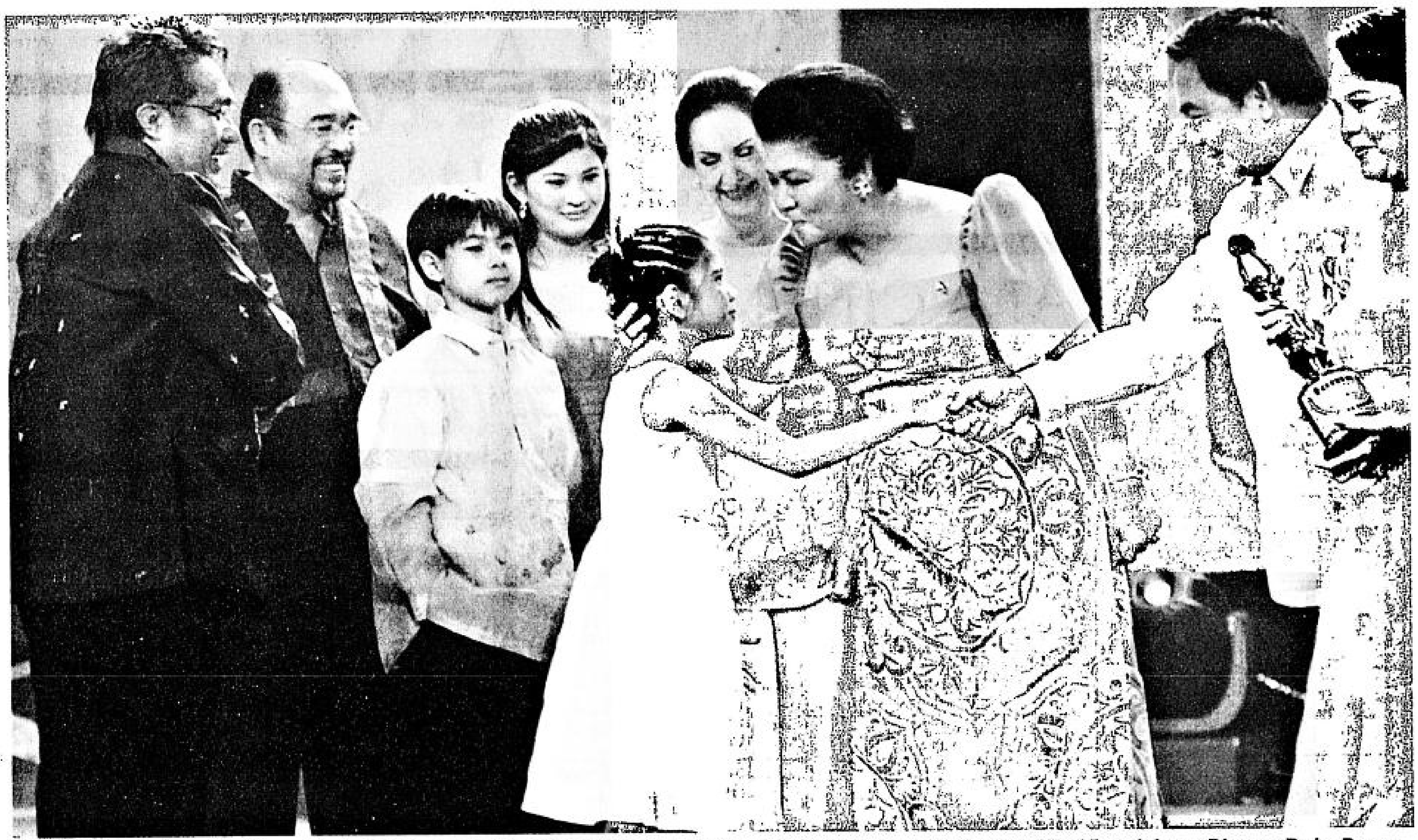
ARA MINA: Forgets to thank boyfriend Jomari Yllana

MADAME Sevilla bags another best picture award for 'Magnifico.'

FAMAS AWARDS

Only winners showed up

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan



FORMER First Lady Imelda Marcos is about to kiss best child actress De Leon after giving the best picture trophy to 'Magnifico.' From left are: Director De los Reyes, Johnny Delgado, Jiro Manio, Romero, MMDA chair Bayani Fernando and Sevilla.

THE STARS and other movie personalities who attended the 52nd Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences awards ceremony last Saturday night were also the ones who brought home the awards.

Among the directors nominated, Maryo J. de los Reyes ("Magnifico") was the only filmmaker present. Eventually, he won the award over Joel Lamangan ("Filipinas"), Gil Portes ("Homecoming"), Marilou Diaz-Abaya ("Noon at Ngayon") and Mark Meily ("Crying Ladies").

Best actor winner Jay Manalo ("Bayaran") arrived as early as 9 p.m. But best actor nominees Aga Muhlach ("Kung Ako na lang Sana"), Eric Quizon ("Crying Ladies"), Richard Gomez ("Filipinas) and Cesar Montano ("The Chavit Singson Story") were conspicuously absent.

Among the producers of this year's best picture nominees, only Violeta Sevilla of Violett Films attended the ceremony. Her film, "Magnifico," won the award.

Exception

An exception were the nominees in the best actress category: Ara Mina ("Huling Birhen") and Ai-Ai de las Alas. ("Ang Tanging Ina") were present that night. But De las Alas was one of the hosts of the awards ceremony. Ara bagged the best actress award.

"*Wala akong* escort *ngayon*," said Ara Mina in her acceptance speech.

INQUIRER Entertainment learned that her boyfriend, Jomari Yllana, was in Cebu that night. Ara later apologized to Yllana for forgetting to thank him for the award.

Last year, the Famas best actress award caused quite a stir when it was handed to bold starlet Aleck Bovick. Some Famas members had accused Bovick's camp of vote-buying. They claimed that Bovick even paid for the air-conditioning of the Famas office to ensure her victory.

Bovick and best supporting actress winner Celia Rodriguez ("Magnifico") presented the award to Ara Mina.

LAST year's Famas best actress, Bovick, in a sexy dance number

NEWCOMER Tanya Garcia can learn a thing or two from Angelica de la Cruz, who performed like a pro.

ACOUSTIC singer Nyoy Volante performs one of the best theme song nominees.

Rodriguez was dressed in a flowing magenta pantsuit. But Hilda Koronel, who has won two best supporting actress awards for "Crying Ladies," was not around. So were nominees Alessandra de Rossi ("Cory Quirino, NBI Files") and Maui Taylor ("Huling Birhen").

"This is my fourth trophy from Famas," said Rodriguez. "*Magaling naman po talaga ako.*"

Isabella de Leon won the best child actress award for "Magnifico" and not Kristel Aina Fulgar ("Malikmata") as earlier reported.

Eddie Garcia, this year's Famas Hall of Fame awardee for best actor, was absent, too. The honor was bestowed upon him after he won his fifth best actor trophy last year for "Bahid."

In 1974, Garcia was the recipient of the Hall of Fame honor for best supporting actor after wining five trophies under the category. He also became a recipient of the Hall of Fame award for best director in 1991.

Garcia is the first artist to receive three Hall of Fame awards from the Famas.

SEXY actress Juliana Palermo wakes up the bored audience with her see-through, white and blue gown, with only cosmetic glitters covering her breasts.

Strong at 70

Gloria Romero collected another Lifetime Achievement award for her contribution to the local movie industry. She has appeared in more than 150 films for the past 54 years. These include director Laurice Guillen's "Tanging Yaman," which won for Romero her 2002 best actress award.

"Believe it or not, I'm 70 years old and I'm very proud of it. *Malakas pa po ako,*" said Romero. "I hope to be able to continue making good movies *kahit uugud-ugod na ako.*"

As always, De las Alas was a very effective host. Famas organizers should have gotten Boy Abunda to share hosting chores with her instead of youngsters Tanya Garcia, Chynna Hortaleza and Mikel Campos, who obviously lacked experienced.

Campos kept committing mistakes. He even called award presenter Tirso Cruz III, "Miss Tirso."

With his witty remarks, Abunda would have made the four-hour ceremony less boring for the audience.

Abunda was present that night to accept his Dr. Jose Perez Memorial award.

"I thank the Vera-Perez family," said Abunda. "Because of them, I became a wealthier and better person."

Bovick and Cindy Kurleto each performed a dance number, while awards host Garcia and Angelica de la Cruz did a duet.

Garcia, who looked ill at ease singing onstage, can learn a thing or two from De la Cruz, who appeared to be the more experienced performer.

Rachel Alejandro, Roselle Nava and Nyoy Volante sang the Famas best theme song nominees.

TV HOST and model Kurleto is the night's most unforgettable face.

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

'Preposterous'

Says GMA 7 of ABS-CBN's charges of 'false and malicious' reporting of Dolphy issue

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission will meet with officials of ABS-CBN and GMA 7 after the latter asked the commission to investigate the rival network for possible violations of the Television Code when it reported on the Dolphy issue.

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. had accused GMA 7 of "false and malicious reporting" of the Dolphy issue, that it cited no specific source and that it failed to air the side of ABS-CBN.

The Television Code require networks to quote either primary or secondary news sources and for news reporting to be "factual, fair and as objective as possible." The Code also provided that "unconfirmed reports shall be identified as such and verified for accuracy at the soonest possible time."

But in a statement, GMA 7 said it "considers it preposterous for ABS-CBN to also claim that GMA 7 had reported these stories because ABS-CBN is a competitor and because GMA 7 will benefit from making reports that will put ABS-CBN or its management in a bad light." It denied also denied ABS-CBN's other charges.

DOLPHY

GMA 7 said in the statement that major newspapers had been carrying the Dolphy story before Channel 7 picked it up. The network also said it had contacted ABS-CBN but was told to refer to the press statement, which GMA also aired in its news programs.

"What ABS-CBN denied was that politics had something to do with a purely show business issue," the statement said, adding that there was no denial in the ABS-CBN statement that Dolphy's program was being canceled.

"Yet the print media are not ABS-CBN's competitors," the GMA 7 statement stressed. "ABS-CBN's conclusion that GMA 7's action was born of malice because ABS-CBN is a competitor is simply illogical and a non sequitur."

In a letter dated April 6, ABS-CBN asked the NTC to penalize GMA for violating its franchise when it reported during the March 22 edition of "24 Oras" and "Saksi" that Dol-

PREPOSTEROUS/ A22

Nora Aunor movie in Manila Film Fest

SUPERSTAR Nora Aunor's "Naglalayag," directed by Maryo J. de los Reyes and produced by Angora Films, is among the six official entries to this year's weeklong Manila Film Festival, according to Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who chairs the festival executive committee.

Another Maryo J. de los Reyes movie, Viva Films' thriller "Kulimlim," starring Robin Padilla and written by Roy Iglesias, made it to the list.

The other entries are Mac Alejandre's "Liberated 2" (Seiko Films), written by Ricky Lee; Ronnie Ricketts' "Mano Mano 3, Arnis… the Lost Art" (Rocketts Productions), written by Ronnie Ricketts; Joel Lamangan's "Sabel" (Regal Films), written by Ricky Lee, and Wenn Deramas' "Volta" (Star Cinema), written by Mel Mendoza and Artemio Abad.

The movies will be shown from June 23-29.

The entries were chosen by a script selection committee headed by University of the Philippines professor Gigi Alfonso.

Each of the scriptwriters of the official entries to the film festival will receive a cash incentive of P100,000, Atienza said in a statement.

The entries were chosen based on the following: artistry and creativity (40 percent), thematic and positive cultural values (30 percent), and commercial viability on a universal scale (30 percent), said Atienza.

"From what I gathered, most of the scripts were really good," the mayor said.

He described this year's short list of entries as "well-rounded, featuring most film genres."

"As in previous years, we expect the entries that would be featured in the film festival to be high-quality, entertaining and commercially viable. All of the entries have powerhouse casts," said Atienza. *Marinel R. Cruz*

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AYALA CINEMAS

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
THX 1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	1 PAYCHECK	1 BIG FISH	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:45, 11:20	1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 PETER PAN	2 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	2 TAKING LIVES	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 PAYCHECK 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45, 11:20	2 GRUDGE 2
3 TAKING LIVES	3 PETER PAN	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 PETER PAN 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	3 50 FIRST DATES
4 TWISTED	4 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	4 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 TWISTED 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30	4 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
5 PAYCHECK		5 PETER PAN	GUARANTEED SEATS 5 TAKING LIVES 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20	5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
		6 PAYCHECK		
		7 TWISTED		

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 MASIKIP SA DIBDIB 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10
2 BIG FISH 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

ENTERTAINMENT LIVE!

GLORIETTA	GREENBELT
HARD ROCK CAFÉ, GLORIETTA 3 featuring MELT (April 20, 9:30om)	MERK'S: Happy Hour - Romy Posadas; Acoustic Jive TAVERN ON THE SQUARE: Escape (9:30 pm)

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
PHILIPPINE FASHION WEEK April 21 to 30, 2004	NICKELODEON'S SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: BIKINI BOTTOM BASH April 23 to 25, 11:00am, 3.00pm, 6:00pm	TV ESKWELA SHOW April 24, 2004

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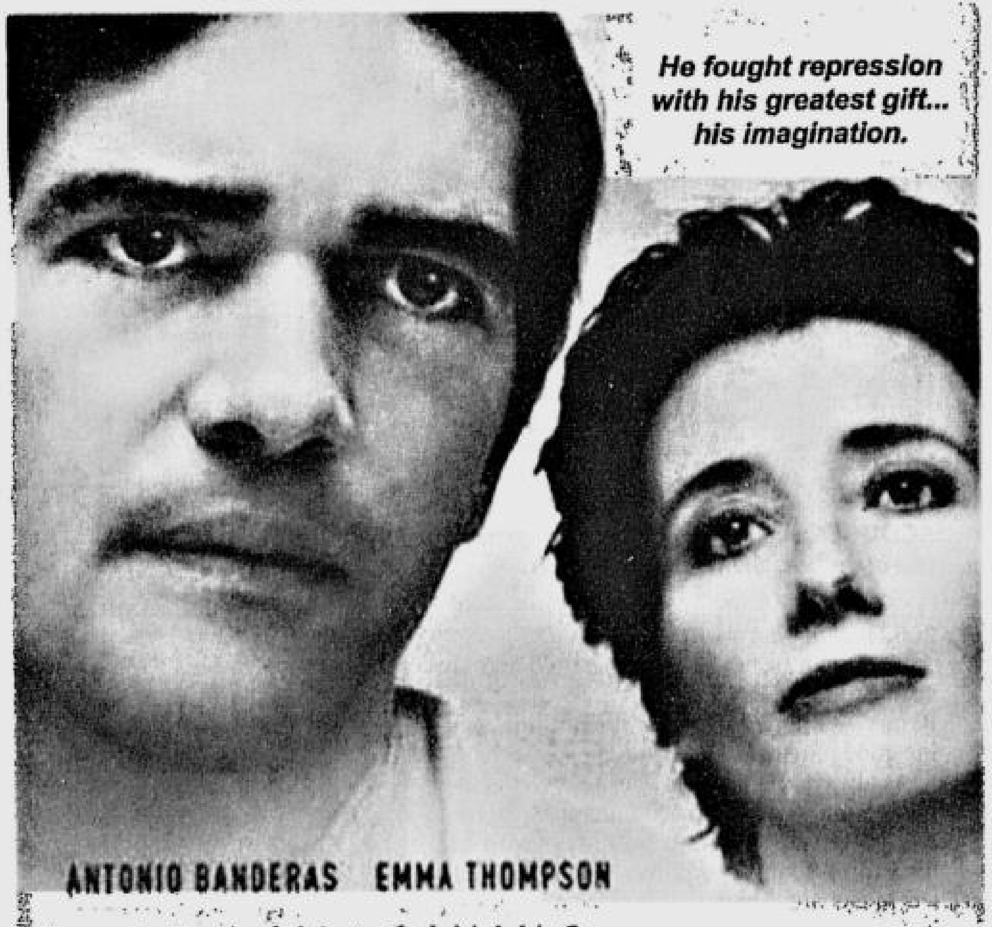
He fought repression with his greatest gift… his imagination.
ANTONIO BANDERAS EMMA THOMPSON

IMAGINING ARGENTINA
written & directed by
oscar ® winner
christopher hampton

During the darkest hours in the history of Argentina, shines a beautiful mystical tale of love. One man's enchanting gift of clairvoyance becomes his and other victims' only means of survival. The only problem is, he cannot "see" his own beloved wife's fate. Can he find her in time?

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)

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"Ewan McGregor is perfectly cast as the romantic hero." --- NATIONAL POST

"An examplary and moving entertainment from start to finish. BIG FISH really is a delight." --- PREMIERE

"BIG FISH is one of those rare, artful movies that you can call magical without misusing the word." --- L.A.DAILY NEWS

COLUMBIA PICTURES AYALA CINEMAS Lov'em all!

"They say that when you meet the love of your life, time stops, and that's true."

EWAN McGREGOR
DANNY DE VITO JESSICA LANGE

BIG FISH
AN ADVENTURE AS BIG AS LIFE ITSELF
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance13 (PG-13)

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MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance13 (PG-13)

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Ayala Cinema Links: For screening times call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice. Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart). Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

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BIR moves to prevent tax credit scams

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue is set to require holders of BIR-issued tax credit certificates to submit these TCCs for revalidation, a move intended to prevent the fraudulent use of tax credits that had resulted in billions of pesos in losses to the government.

The revenue agency said it was now preparing its database for the revalidation, which the BIR is expected to order next month.

According to Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares, the revalidation would be to check whether TCCs in circulation were all genuine so that syndicates would not be able to sell fake certificates to potential victims. After it orders the revalidation, the BIR will no longer honor requests for tax credits if the TCCs presented do not bear a seal of revalidation.

A TCC is a paper that serves as a proof of a company's claim for tax credits, which are granted either to exporting firms that are entitled to duty-free privileges or to those that have tax refunds.

While the revalidation is yet to take place, Henares said, the BIR has already begun implementing tighter procedures in approving requests for transferring TCCs from one owner to another. An approval by the BIR is needed before a TCC buyer may use the tax credits.

Henares said the decision to order a revalidation of BIR-issued TCCs was a measure to avoid tax credit scams while the revenue agency's computerization program has yet to be implemented.

The BIR has a pending request with the Asian Development Bank for a grant that will be used to computerize its tax credit system. The BIR is also looking for other donors in the private sector to help fund the computerization program.

The BIR's move to revalidate TCCs will follow the initiative of the One-Stop Shop Duty and Credit Drawback Center (OSS), a unit of the Department of Finance that earlier ordered the revalidation of all OSS-issued TCCs.

"We are now strengthening the system. Just because previous scams only involved TCCs issued by the OSS doesn't mean the BIR is spared from fraudulent activities," Henares said in an interview.

The OSS ordered the revalidation of the TCCs it issued after it uncovered last year a P24-million tax credit scam. It involved the selling of used TCCs using the name Rohm Electronics to Nissan Motors Corp. and Splash Manufacturing Corp. The two companies used the TCCs in settling their tax obligations, thereby resulting in P24 million in lost revenue for the government.

The P24-million tax credit scam was just one of the many other fraudulent activities involving tax credits. In the 1990s, the government lost more than P5 billion from tax credit scams, the biggest of which involved the Chingkoe group of companies.

Sy bid to enter Equitable PCI Bank snagged

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SM group's bid for a board seat in Equitable PCI Bank hit a snag as the country's third biggest lender junked key proxies solicited by retail magnate Henry Sy for today's annual stockholders' meeting.

But the SM group yesterday protested the invalidation by EPCI Bank's corporate secretary of 10 million proxies, about half of which was given by foreign custodian bank Citigroup and Standard Chartered while the rest came from local investors.

The SM group claimed it had generated enough proxies to install at least one director in EPCI Bank.

In a letter to EPCI corporate secretary Nilo Divina yesterday, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, BDO Capital and Investment Corp. executive vice president Eduardo Francisco lamented that the bank had held a forum for proxy validation only one business day before today's meeting and not as prescribed by the bank's by-laws.

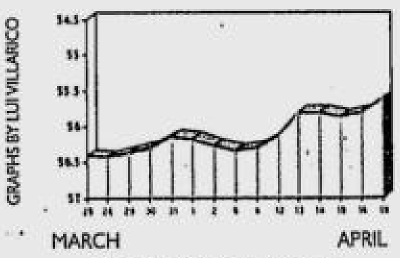
Banco de Oro Universal Bank had submitted its proxies before the April 6 deadline but the validation committee set the forum only last Friday.

The SM group claimed that EPCI had slapped extra-stringent requirements at the

SY/B6

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 55.62 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 19, 2004

¥ 107.90 = $1

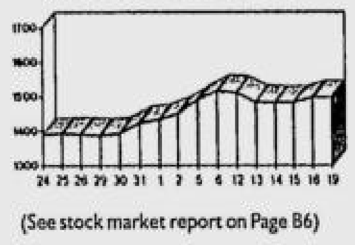
As of 5 p.m., April 19, 2004

GOLD: $404.10-404.60

per ounce Hong Kong, April 19, 2004

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Shares close little changed

SHARE prices closed little changed yesterday, giving up early gains as investors remained cautious following a drive-by shooting Sunday on the headquarters of the local unit of Royal Dutch Shell, dealers said.

The military blamed the communist New People's Army or leftist groups allied with the communists for the attack which may have been intended to protest against recent oil price hikes.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 0.63 points to 1,497.48 after trading between 1,495.52 and 1,506.40.

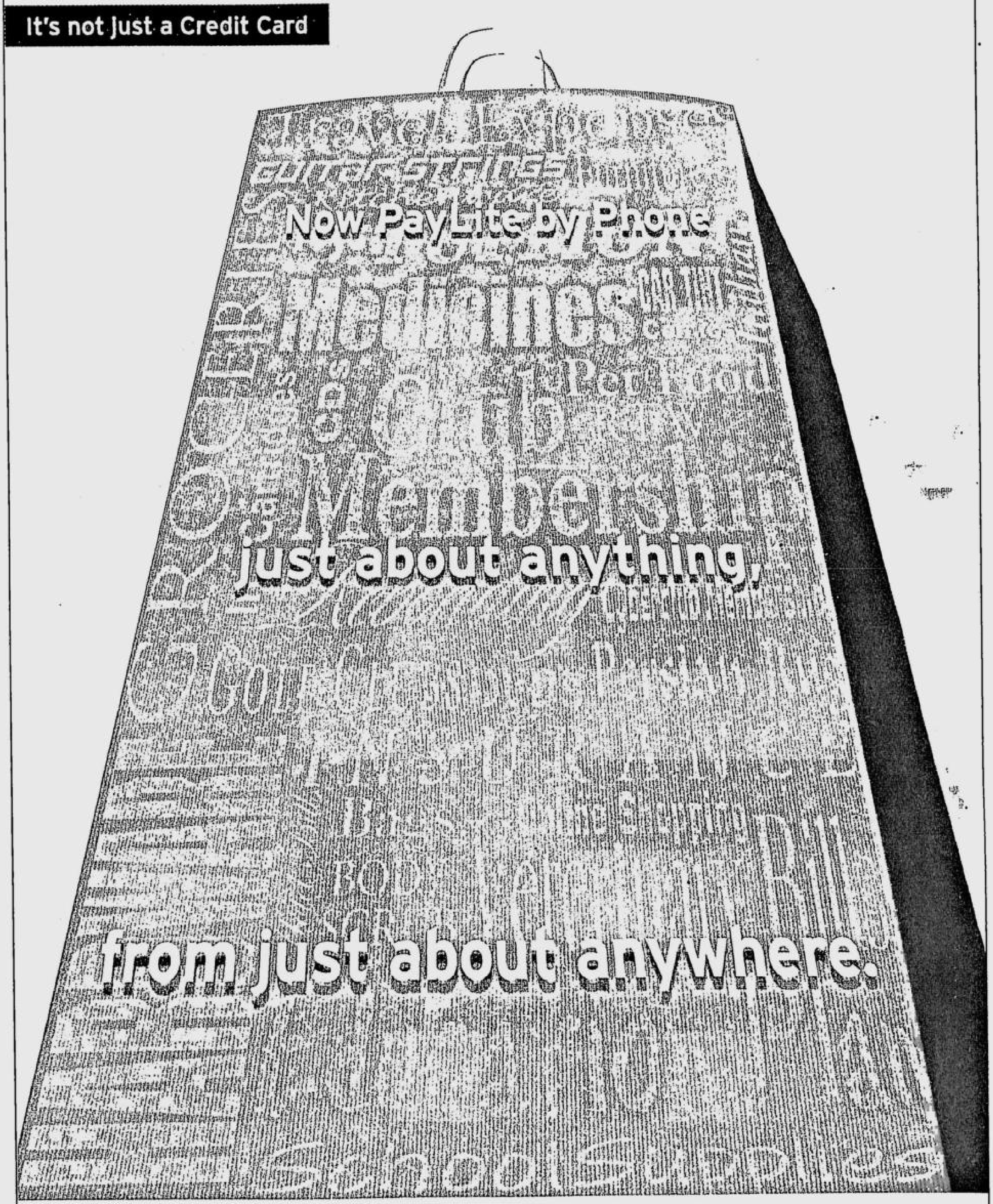
Losers led gainers 27 to 12, with 45 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 150.99 million shares worth P451.69 million after 199.8 million shares worth P317.1 million on Friday.

The all-shares index was up 5.31 points at 954.77 while the commercial-industrial index rose 0.84 at 2,353.89. Property fell 0.13 at 529.66, while mining was up 34.58 at 1,467.01.

The oil sector slipped 0.03 to 1.18 while the banking and financial services sector shed 1.13 to 425.91. *AFP*

A member of citigroup



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Never walk a loan

CELLPHONE hold-ups are rising in the streets. Students—meaning, our school kids—are the favorite targets. I am thus certain you are dying for news about the bad loans of banks.

Today's little piece of sh..., *este*, "good news" *pala*, is something known among the government economists as a "ratio."

It seems that, based on official figures from the Bangko Sentral, the bad loans of banks, as a percentage of all their loans, are dropping. Again, AS A PERCENTAGE.

Hep, hep, hooray for the "ratio!" Yehey, we can now do something we dare not do before. We can all just walk into banks for a loan to finance our own home! There is a God!

Now, for the bad news. Unfortunately, it is all just accounting magic. Actually, the drop in the RATIO does not mean that, finally, companies are able to repay their loans.

As a matter of fact, the new bad loans of banks continue to increase. In other words,

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

business still looks bad.

***

THAT magic in the ratio, as we reported yesterday in this section, only comes courtesy of one major account called National Steel Corp., or the NSC.

The company is restructuring its finances, particularly its loans with local banks, which are taking a not-so-pretty haircut, meaning, loan write-off.

The lucky beneficiary of all that is an Indian group which controls steel mills in many other countries.

***

IT IS just that the bad loans of NSC were so big, that the write-off of part of them, plus the restructuring of the rest, brought about the magic ratio.

It is just not a big deal at all. As I said, the bad loans of banks are still rising. Thus, they still foreclose on real estate mortgages left and right.

They are still saddled with hundreds of billions of pesos worth of idle real estate. And nobody is buying the same property from the banks.

It so happens that banks know as much as about the property business as the "housing czar" of this cute administration of Gloriaetta, meaning, not much.

The last time I checked, which was actually some years ago, this country lacked something like 5 million housing units. Yes, that bad!

***

AS the rise in bad loans of banks indicates, businesses are still folding up, particularly in the manufacturing sector.

I have a contact who makes PVC pipes. Nowadays, if he can cover the salaries of his workers, he considers it a big success.

But why do factories which make construction materials still lose money? We need houses. It's not as if we are already up to here with houses.

We have the facilities to produce the materials for houses, but they are not fully used. We also have the land, but it's with banks that do not know what to do with it.

And so here is the score: Construction business is bad, but still we don't have houses. You would imagine that construction should be booming!

Lacking here, I think, is the government program for housing. I mean, where is it? How about a little push from this cute administration?

***

FOR despite the death-defying publicity stunts which we see from this cute administration, our prospects of having our own home still look pretty bad.

In real estate, nobody is moving, except perhaps Megaworld, Ayala Land, and Shoemart, and they only have to expand as a matter of survival.

A study by the international accounting and consultancy firm Grant Thornton, of which local Punongbayan and Araullo is a member firm, may be helpful.

Among local companies, it said, one of the main constraints to expansion is the lack of working capital. See—it's still financing.

And if you can borrow from banks, you have to pay for a pretty expensive loan. Another constraint to business expansion is the cost of financing.

All that, I insist, has something to do with banks having too much bad loans. It is something which some magic ratio cannot solve.

***

LIGHTNING may not strike twice, sure, but don't you ever tell it to this poor INQUIRER reader who we shall only know as Mela Lee (actually her real name).

Her story is about the pre-need education plan. Now, I am sure that most of us bought similar plans. Watch out—maybe we can learn from Ms Lee's sad experience.

Ms Lee has two sons. She bought education plans for both from Pacific Plans. This is under the giant Yuchengco group. You know—banks, schools, construction, etc.

Recently, she tried to avail herself of the benefits of the Pacific education plan for the second son, who was supposed to go to the Montessori International School.

From what I gathered, questions arose. It seems Pacific claimed that the school was not eligible for the plan, because it was an "international" school.

Ms Lee then obtained a certification from the DECS that the school was "international" in name only. End of story? You wish!

***

UPON her proving the claim of Pacific wrong, Ms Lee was then faced with another hurdle, before she could get something which was hers, in the first place, because she paid for it with hard earned money.

It seems that, last year, Ms Lee was given the same runaround by Pacific, until finally, she was given a last option. She had to sign some documents.

It turned out that, to get her own money from the company to pay for her son's schooling, she was made to sign something called a "non-enrollment."

Ms Lee now says that Pacific never explained to her the full implication of signing such a document. Hmm.

Indeed, if her son was going to school, why would she sign something which said that he was not, especially if it would mean that she would lose her own money?

Pacific, according to Ms Lee, is still giving her the runaround. Not only that, this is not the first time it happened to her. With the same company, at that!

***

SHE also had problems claiming payment from Pacific for the tuition of her first son. It seems the school where his son was going to was also not among those, er, "qualified" under the program.

As a compromise, the company paid her the average of the tuition in schools which are...well "qualified."

Thus she only got P55,000 from the company, although the education plan she bought entitled her son to the highest tuition fee at the time of the availment, which was more than P80,000.

Question: What do people like her do? Run to the SEC, of course, which is the policeman of companies like Pacific.

Whaddayano, it is not easy to talk to the head of the SEC unit called "non-traditional securities," which takes care of pre-need. Believe me, I tried!

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STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Branches)
As of March 23, 2004

ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Items	P	480,298,095.97
Due from Bangko Sentral		1,007,676,156.12
Due from Other Banks		1,694,959,289.19
Interbank Loans Receivable		-
Trading Account Securities (Net)		8,503,857.63
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		7,616,955,631.67
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)		20,161,276,611.60
Equity Investments (Net)		26,200,000.00
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)		1,532,801,420.94
Other Assets (Net):		
Property Owned/Acquired		1,839,916,437.92
Others		1,316,804,963.96
TOTAL ASSETS	P	35,685,392,465.00
LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	706,613,741.97
Savings Deposits		20,919,018,107.00
Time Deposits		8,365,326,201.15
Due to Bangko Sentral		15,094,000.00
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		130,440,439.26
Bills Payable:		
BSP-Rediscounts/Special Programs		6,640,000.00
Interbank Borrowings		300,000,000.00
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		54,331,191.71
Other Liabilities		810,484,115.73
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	31,307,947,796.82
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		
Capital Stock	P	1,795,015,200.00
Surplus		2,242,836,464.87
Surplus Reserves		339,593,003.31
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	4,377,444,668.18
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	35,685,392,465.00
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Bills for Collection	P	793,738.41
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements		1,062,867,611.80
Invested in:		
Government Securities		692,701,474.71
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock		39,857,403.92
Other Assets		330,308,733.17
Accountabilities:		
Trust & Other Fiduciary		154,373,021.73
Common Trust Funds		292,579.84
Investment/Fund Management		908,202,010.23
Other Contingent Accounts		75,012,651.32
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	1,138,674,001.53
Additional Information:		
1. Deposits of		
a) Government		-
b) Banks		13,229,986.41
c) Trust Department		317,900,886.64
2. a. Total Non-Performing Loans		1,271,128,700.32
b. Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets		2,440,210,862.52
c. General Loan Loss Reserve		224,880,709.04
d. Specific Loan Loss Reserve		486,804,671.31
e. Total DOSRI Loans/Advances		1,926,945,664.80
f. Past Due DOSRI Loans Advances		-
g. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio		5.72%
h. Ratio of Total DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio		8.66%
i. Ratio of Past Due DOSRI to Total Loan Portfolio		-
j. Return on Equity		10.55%

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Makati City) S.S.

We, NOLI S. GOMEZ and PASCUAL M. GARCIA, III of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd) NOLI S. GOMEZ
First Vice President

(Sgd) PASCUAL M. GARCIA, III
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 14 April, 2004, affiants exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificates No. 132080502 issued at Manila on 15 January 2003 and No. 154886212 issued at Quezon City on 28 January 2003.

Doc. No. 400
Book No. 80
Page No. CXCV
Series of 2004

(Sgd) ATTY. JOSE HERNANDEZ DY.
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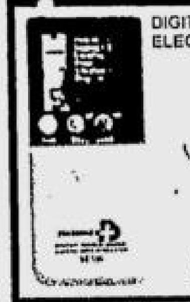

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Demand for carton boxes rises

THE DEMAND for containerboard materials, particularly lineboard and corrugating medium paper used in boxes, has been steadily increasing since the fourth quarter of last year.

"Economic growth means increase in consumption, and increase in consumption ultimately leads to increase in demand for carton boxes to contain goods" said Stephen Cheng, president of Trans National Paper Inc.

According to manufacturers of containerboards, the Philippines needs to import old corrugated cartons (OCCs) to supplement its requirements.

Miguel del Rosario, vice president of United Pulp and Paper Co., Inc., said that in the Philippines, only about 70 percent of all old cartons are recovered.

"Locally available OCC is not enough to satisfy the requirements of the mills," Del Rosario said.

Local manufacturers are left with no choice but to increase prices.

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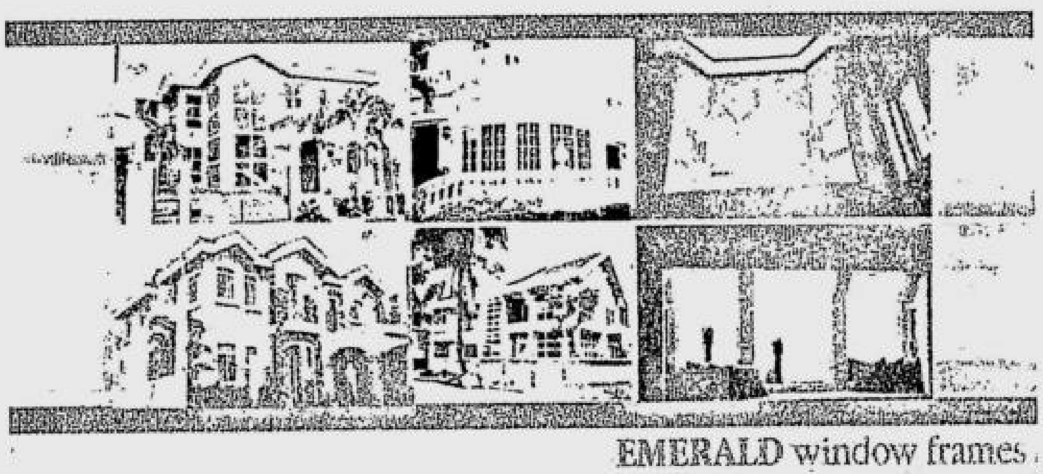

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Manila Water's *Lingap Eskwela*

Be cool, be clean in all public schools this summer

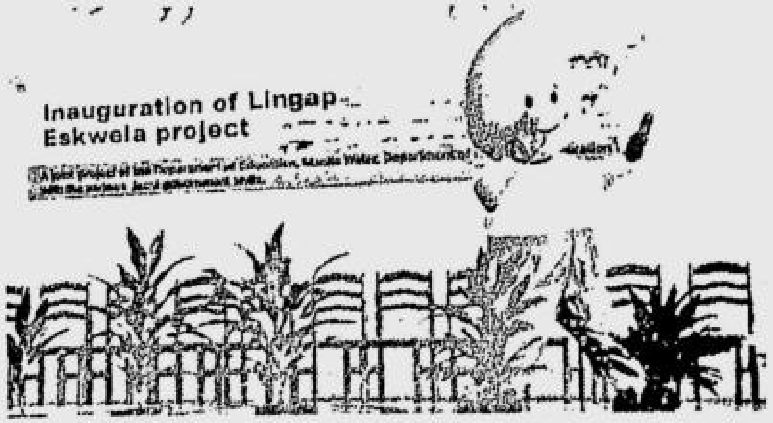
It's the middle of summer, school's out. The break brings out a sigh of relief for Liza, a Grade 4 pupil of a local public school. Before the much-awaited vacation, Liza normally wakes up each morning before sunrise so she can prepare for school, and make the more than three-kilometer trek to her school.

Some of the kids in the neighborhood, fellow-classmates, walk with her. Upon arriving, they squeeze into a small classroom, built for 30 students, but today filled to the brim with 50. The number has swelled because of new enrollees. This is typical for public schools where facilities are small and far-in-between, compared to more expensive private schools. Worst of all, other basic facilities are in a sorry state: there are no clean comfort rooms nor drinking fountains with sufficient running water.

Tripartite MOA signed

To solve the potential health risks for students like Liza, a special project called "Lingap Eskwela" was launched late last year by the Department of Health (DOH)and the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Manila Water Company. The agreement was reached after the two government agencies and the Ayala-led Manila Water decided that a program was needed, albeit urgently, to ensure the promotion of proper sanitation and hygiene among Metro Manila's schoolchildren in the public schools and maintain the highest quality of water supply.

As the pilot school for the Lingap Program, Pasig Central, with a combined student population of 5,000 students, was chosen. A memorandum of agreement was signed between DOH Secretary Manuel M. Dayrit, DepEd Secretary Edilberto C. De Jesus and Manila Water President Antonino T. Aquino, and witnessed by Mayor Soledad Eusebio of Pasig City. The tripartite agreement signed by the lead proponents signaled the start of the program that would cover the improvement of at least 237 public schools within the East Zone in one year's time.



Pat Tubig, Manila Water's mascot, spreads the gospel of clean water and its importance to the students of the University of Makati.

It's all about clean water for our kids. A fire hydrant is inaugurated at the Fort Bonifacio Elementary and High School version of Lingap Eskwela. Over 17,000 students now benefit from the project.

Working towards a common goal

The DepEd is the lead agency that makes sure that a full assessment of the water system in all public schools in the city, is set up to rate existing facilities. The ranking is necessary to assess which school needs to be prioritized in terms of water supply and infrastructural facilities. The school's education department shall also see to it that the existing science curriculum be expanded to include water testing, water conservation and facility improvement values with close assistance from Manila Water.

The role of the DOH is to provide technical, consultative and advisory assistance on environmental health particularly water supply, sanitation and proper disposal of waste. The department shall also conduct periodic water sample tests for bacteria and residual chlorine, and ensure that the schools have adequate water supply.

As the water utility for the East Zone, Manila Water has designed the water assessment template which the DepEd will follow, as well as the development of educational programs that will integrate water testing, conservation, and preservation of the environment in the science curriculum of each targeted school.

In line also with its basic function, Manila Water will likewise undertake weekly residual chlorine sampling and monthly bacteriological tests to monitor water quality. Strict inspection of water and sanitary facilities of all public schools in the east zone of Metro Manila shall be done, including the 'desludging' of school septic tanks when needed.

Schools completed

After the MOA was signed, Manila Water in cooperation with the various local government units and school boards, quickly embarked on the rehabilitation and improvement of the Pasig Central, Krus na Ligas and Project 6 Elementary School in Quezon City, San Joaquin and Santolan Elementary School. Recently, the Fort Bonifacio Elementary and High School and University of Makati, with a combined population of 17,000 students, was completed. Installed during the inauguration ceremonies were a new fire hydrant, a brand-new water pipeline for the three schools in the compound, and the disinfection/cleaning of its cisterns.

This summer, the Lingap Program goes into higher gear. Work is ongoing to provide clean and safe water, and adequate facilities to more schools in Mandaluyong, San Juan, Marikina, Makati, Pasig, Quezon City, Taguig-Pateros, Rizal.

Students in these schools can look forward to a splendid opening school-year once these projects are finished.

Meanwhile, it's off to great summer!

joint project of:

Manila Water president Antonino T. Aquino (from right), Pasig City Mayor Soledad Eusebio, Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus and Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit sign a memorandum of agreement launching the 'Lingap Eskwela' program at the Pasig Central Elementary School late last year.

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As of March 23, 2004

ASSETS		Amount
Cash and Cash Items	P	2,494,537 87
Due from Central Bank		90,850,110 71
Due from Other Banks		2,185,890,047 27
Interbank Loans Receivable		
Trading Account Securities		
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)		2,777,371,022 49
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)		2,589,725,441 58
Equity Investments (Net)		2,579,850 00
Due from Head Office/Branches/Agencies Abroad		2,085,762,565 88
Bank Premises, Furnitures, Fixtures & Equipments (Net)		21,875,292 89
Other Assets (Net):		
Others		187,458,559 22
TOTAL ASSETS	P	9,050,043,427 87

LIABILITIES		
Demand Deposits	P	216,988,377 03
Savings Deposits		744,950,679 34
Time Deposits		3,992,928,594 52
Special/Other Deposits		25,870,514 04
Due to Central Bank		3,781,784 58
Due to Head Office/Branches/Agencies Abroad		4,118,445,301 68
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders		1,230,117 28
Bills Payable		
Interbank Borrowings		95,221,588 28
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		867,054 83
Other Liabilities		248,410,275 32
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	8,447,690,284 88

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		Amount
Assigned Capital	P	444,323,634 54
Other Capital Accounts		58,029,508 45
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	502,353,142 99
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	9,050,043,427 87

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS		
Unused Commercial Letters of Credit	P	2,003,711,914 00
Spot/Future Exchange Bought		2,144,364,815 97
Spot/Future Exchange Sold		2,230,270,026 91
Other Contingent Accounts		2,209,812,140 23
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P	8,588,158,897 11

Other information

1	Deposits of	
	a Government	nil
	b Banks	8,289,238 [illegible]
	c Trust Department	nil
2	Compliance with Magna Carta Law	
	Prescribed Ratio 6% Small Ent. 2% Medium Ent.	
	Actual Compliance	2 [illegible]
3	Amount of Non-Performing Loans	148,123,381 00
4	Ratio of Non Performing loans to total loan portfolio	5.16%
5.	Amount of classified loans and other risk assets	148,121,181 60
6	General Provision for Loan Losses	147,050,604 97
7	Specific Provision for Loan Losses	103,020,104 25
8	Return on Equity (ROE) - Based on Assigned Capital	24.24%
	Return on Equity (ROE) - Based on Shareholder's Equity	19.51%
	Return on Equity (ROE) - Inclusive of Net Due to HO	4.65%
9	Amount of DOSRI loans/advances	9,131,457 [illegible]
10	Ratio of DOSRI loans/adv to total loans/advances	0.18%
11	Amount of Past Due DOSRI loans /advances	nil
12	Ratio of Past Due DOSRI loans/adv to total loan portfolio	nil
13	"Net Due to Head Office/Branches/Agencies Abroad" forms part of capital of Philippine Branch of foreign bank	2,032,852,735 60

*Amended to conform with Circular No. 208 dated August 17, 1999 and Memorandum to All Banks dated November 29, 1999

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
MAKATI CITY) S S

WE, JOHNNY CO and MA. REGINA FAJARDO of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief

(Sgd.) JOHNNY CO
General Manager and
Country Head

(Sgd.) MA. REGINA FAJARDO
Vice-President Operations

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this April 10, 2004 affiant exhibiting their Community Tax Certificate No. 03225 431 issued at Manila [illegible] 2004 and Tax Certificate No. 10851986 issued at Makati City on January 6, 2004

(Sgd.) BENJAMIN MATA
NOTARY PUBLIC
Until Dec 31, 2004
PTR No. MO293758
Date Issued Jan. 3, 2004

Doc No. 919
Book No. 1/3
Page No. [illegible]
Series of '04

Bayantel sales seen to hit P5.4B

By Clarissa S. Batino

BAYAN Telecommunications Inc., the phone company of the Lopez Group, yesterday projected its net revenue this year to grow by about 8 percent to about P5.4 billion from almost P5 billion in 2003.

"We are looking at an eight percent growth in revenue year on year," said Gary Oliver, chief finance officer of BayanTel. "The increase will mainly come from the continued growth of our fixed line business, enterprise oriented business and data services."

Its net revenue in the first 2 months of the year has already grown by 11 percent, driven by higher sales as a result of an increase in subscriber base.

The Lopez phone company was banking on increased revenue from voice and data services this year, the BayanTel official said in an interview during the opening yesterday of the Philippine Summit on the Information Society.

As of February, BayanTel subscribers have grown by about 25 percent to nearly 250,000 compared to the level a year ago.

Olivar said the company's subscriber take-up would be sustained with the launching of Bayan 399 product, a new fixed-line scheme. The Lopez phone company earlier said it had put on hold plans to go into the cellular phone business.

"Bayan 399 is the most affordable monthly rate for fixed line," Olivar said. "We continue to come up with affordable and reliable services for our customers."

BayanTel had again earmarked P1.2 billion in capital expenditures for the year just like in 2003. Company officials said BayanTel had generated enough cash to finance its capital outlay in 2004.

"The capex will mainly be used to finance the roll out of fiber optics this year," Olivar said. "We continue to be aggressive, to be the preferred data solutions provider for small and medium enterprises and corporations."

BayanTel last year launched a P500-million investment plan to finance the rollout of fiber optics in 100 buildings in various business districts in the metropolis.

The investment in network infrastructure would support the growing requirement of call centers and business process outsourcing offices. The rollout of fiber optics would further enhance BayanTel's data business, which has been one of the main drivers in the company's increasing sales.

Data services surged by about 19 percent in January and February this year, while international long distance service soared by about 43 percent.

BayanTel earlier reported that net revenue in the first 2 months went up by 11 percent to P886 million from P798 million in the same period in 2003.

The company, which is currently under receivership, said it could sustain revenue growth for the rest of the year, given expectations of a much improved business and political climate by the second half of 2004.

The Lopez-owned firm is currently restructuring P477 million of its obligations, of which P200 million are owed to bondholders and P277 million to banks. Five percent of its total loans are classified as clean.

The company said that it would complete the rehabilitation by the third quarter of the year, ahead of the April 2005 deadline set by a court.

BSP warns banks of risk-laden CLNs

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is now looking into the growing exposure of local banks to credit-linked notes (CLNs) and other hedging instruments that use debt papers as underlying instruments.

Nestor Espenilla, BSP assistant governor for bank supervision and examination, said banks should be aware of the accompanying risks in investing in CLNs and other credit derivatives.

A CLN is a pre-funded credit derivative instrument under which the noteholder effectively accepts the transfer of credit risk pertaining to an issuer's pool of assets. The repayment of the principal to the noteholder is contingent upon the occurrence of a defined credit event. In consideration, the noteholder would receive an economic return reflecting the underlying credit risk of the pooled assets.

Espenilla said the BSP had noted the rising volume of credit-linked derivatives, which was the reason why it recently issued a circular prescribing the capital treatment for these instruments.

Otherwise, he said, it would have been difficult to scrutinize the banks' exposure to CLNs because these instruments were lumped into their general investments in securities.

"The concern is that CLN is a form of taking credit risks," Espenilla said. "It's an indirect way of transferring exposure."

"For instance, a (Philippine) bond can be bought by a foreign investor, but risks are transferred to local investors by way of derivatives," he said.

Espenilla added that the BSP would like to know whether the local banks are accumulating more risks from these structured products.

The BSP believes CLN structures are exposed to greater risks compared to investments in direct obligations.

In addition to imposing risk-weighting requirements, the BSP has ruled that all investments in CLNs must be duly approved by the user bank's board of directors and subjected to appropriate risk management procedures.

7-11 breaks losing streak

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CONVENIENCE store operator Philippine Seven Corp. said it planned to dominate the market this year through the aggressive opening of stores in strategic locations.

In a report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Philippine Seven said it would ill also improve on its products and take advantage of co-merchandising opportunities with multinational manufacturing companies.

The company said it opened 32 stores last year and closed down five unprofitable stores. This brought the total number of operating stores to 195 from the previous year's 168.

Philippine Seven said contracts for four new strategic sties were signed last year and that construction has started.

The store operator said it earned P9.3 million in 2003, breaking its three-year losing streak. Philippine Seven earlier reported losses of P56.65 million in 2002, P37.4 million in 2001 and P11.9 million in 2000.

Sources earlier told the INQUIRER that the earnings came from the opening of more stores that hiked the company's gross profit. At the same time, the company was able to cut costs through investments in technology that improved operating efficiencies.

In its report, total sales for the year reached P3.2 billion, 7.5 percent higher than the P3 billion recorded the past year.

Merchandise sales grew in certain product categories such as fastfood, hot food, confectioneries, donuts and hot drinks.

Sales of traditional grocery items, however, weakened. Commission earned from phone cards also slid to P44.6 million last year but the launch of low domination prepaid phone cards dubbed helped stem the decline.

President Chain Store Corp., a 7-Eleven licensee in Taiwan, acquired a 50.4-percent interest in Phil-Seven shortly after the opening of the country's retailing business to foreign ownership in March 2000.

SO ALL MAY KNOW
THE FACTS ABOUT THE CASE OF
TSUNEISHI VS. NEGROS NAVIGATION

FACT 1: TSUNEISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES CEBU, INC. (THICI) IS AN IDEAL FOREIGN INVESTOR, A TRUE PARTNER IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

- THICI is a PEZA-registered joint venture between the TSUNEISHI GROUP – Japan (80%) and Aboitiz & Co., Inc. (20%) established ten years ago in September 1994 with a capital investment of close to US$100 Million
- Tsuneishi Group is a leading shipbuilder in the world and has been in business for 91 years.
- THICI is the largest shipbuilder in the Philippines with annual sales of over US$115 million in 2003 (P6.3 billion).
- In its 10 years of operation, THICI has built 37 world-class ships,
- THICI is ISO 9001/9002 & ISO 14001 certified by the international maritime accrediting body for quality standards - Nippon Kaiji Kyokai. The ISO 9002 is for its quality system. The ISO 14001 (1996 standards) is for its Environmental Management System (EMS), a first in the Philippines.
- THICI's main business is shipbuilding, ship repair and manufacturing of outfittings for ships and vessels.
- THICI builds and exports 52,000 DWT world-class bulk carriers for the international market. It builds 7 ships a year.
- By September this year, THICI will double its production capacity to 14 ships a year and begin building 70,000 DWT bulk carriers (Panamaxes) with its additional investment of P2 billion.

PART 1 OF 5

ADVT

SO ALL MAY KNOW
THE FACTS ABOUT THE CASE OF
TSUNEISHI VS. NEGROS NAVIGATION

FACT 1: continuation

- THICI is the biggest investment in the Philippines by the Tsuneishi Group.
- THICI site facilities are located inside the West Cebu Industrial Park - Special Economic Zone in Buanoy, Balamban, Cebu.
- THICI is the biggest employer in Balamban, Cebu in the central Philippines employing a total of over 3,000 local residents.
- THICI has spurred the economic development of Balamban and has given rise to the flourishing of other downstream industries related to shipbuilding.
- The annual payroll is more than P320 million.
- With the increase in its production capacity in September 2004, THICI will hire an additional 1,000 local workers increasing its annual payroll.
- THICI is fully operated by Filipinos after the successful transfer of technology through the years.
- THICI is among the top 500 companies in the Philippines.
- THICI was awarded "Outstanding Countryside Investor" in 1998 by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- Tsuneishi has elevated the Filipino shipbuilder to the best-of-class global status.
- Through various projects and programs, THICI is also the single largest catalyst and supporter to Balamban's social and community needs, winning the trust and cooperation of the residents.

PART 2 OF 5

ADVT

San Miguel packaging unit posts 13% revenue growth

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN Miguel Packaging Products, a unit of the country's largest food and beverage company, said its revenue from sales grew 13 percent last year to P17.3 billion.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the company said that operating income during the period expanded 30 percent to P2.5 billion due to tight cost management and improved efficiency.

SMPP said sales volume across major product segments likewise rose by 10 percent last year.

SMPP aims to grow its operations through its Total Packaging Solutions (TPS) strategy which has shifted the company's focus to that of a packaging solutions provider from packaging products manufacturing.

The strategy will also allow SMPP to penetrate untapped markets and enable customers to save on overhead costs through various offerings, including toll packing, package designs or export packages.

Emerging as significant sources of SMPP revenue are the packaging requirements of small and medium scale enterprises, and cost-effective alternative package systems to customers, such as crate and pallet leasing, and customized glass bottles.

SMPP research and development also plans to introduce packaging products in the form of polyethelene terephthalate or PET containers for beverages, stand up pouches for condiments and motor oils, and new packaging system for processed meats, fish and food sauces, fruits and vegetable drink blends, and non-refrigerated sausages.

Through its design center, SMPP has expanded its expertise in package designing to corporate identity, logo designing and branding.

SMPP is backed by 15 domestic facilities and three plants in China, two in Vietnam and one in Indonesia

Foreign mining firms not qualified for perks–BOI

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD of Investments has excluded mineral processing activities of foreign-owned firms from the list of businesses qualified for incentives.

The move came in the wake of a recently issued Supreme Court decision declaring unconstitutional certain provisions of the Mining Act of 1995, especially those that pertain to financial and technical assistance agreements with foreign investors.

The decision is under appeal and is not yet final.

According to the specific guidelines of the 2004 Investment Priorities Plan, businesses engaged in the exploration, mining and processing of minerals must be at least 60-percent Filipino-owned to qualify for BOI incentives.

These incentives include income tax holiday, exemption from taxes and duties of imported spare parts for capital equipment, exemption from wharfage dues and export taxes, tax credits and additional deductions from taxable income.

The guidelines for the 2004 IPP did not provide income tax holidays to firms involved in mineral exploration and development, production and direct shipping of ore, and simple processing such as sorting, crushing, washing, drying of minerals.

Mining and quarrying activities must be integrated with mineral processing to be entitled to income tax holiday.

Also, marble processing projects, whether or not integrated with mining and quarrying, are required to export at least half of their output to qualify for incentives.

The latest IPP retained exclusion from incentives of firms engaged in riverbed operations, cave mining and beach mining.

Last March, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said the BOI was set to review the 2004 IPP to look for ways to maintain incentives for mining activities without violating the Constitution.

Purisima said the Department of Trade and Industry would also be creating mining assistance centers in the provinces with rich mineral deposits to facilitate investment inquiries and activities.

The official added that despite the high court ruling, the government could still allow mineral production sharing agreements with foreign firms and that existing ones were still valid.

Last month, the American Chamber of Commerce lauded the signing of Executive Order 270 that outlined the policy agenda for the mining sector, saying this would open up and revitalize the mining activities.

AmCham executive director Robert Sears said the EO would promote responsible mineral resources exploration and utilization to enhance economic growth.

The group cited industry data showing that while the Philippines was among the top eight countries in the world in terms of copper, nickel and gold mineral reserves, the country's minerals remain under-explored.

Experts said that once the mining industry was revitalized, the country could expect an estimated $7.5 billion in annual investments.

CA asked to reconsider ruling

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) is asking the Court of Appeals to reconsider its ruling that set aside the shortening of the term of the directors of Baguio Country Club Corp.

In a motion for reconsideration dated April 13, the Office of the Solicitor General said the SEC had acted purely as a regulator and did not exercise quasi-judicial authority to compel BCCC to amend its by-laws.

It argued that the legislature had entrusted the SEC with the responsibility of enforcing all laws affecting corporations and that it could not be restrained in the performance of its functions "by writs of injunction emanating from tribunals subordinate to the Supreme Court."

The SEC has directing power that enables it to order the performance of particular acts to ensure compliance with the law. It can therefore compel officers of a registered corporation to call meetings of stockholders under the Securities Regulation Code.

The SEC approved BCCC's amended by-laws, which means it could also review and order its rectification, it said.

In the exercise of its regulatory power, the SEC had required BCCC to amend its by-laws and elect a new set of directors to comply with the Corporation Code.

"The purpose of the SEC order dated Aug. 15, 2003 is to rectify a legal infraction reported to it. Whoever reported the infraction whether a BCCC stockholder or not, is immaterial to the exercise of such regulatory power," the OSG said.

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said that in issuing its order, the SEC did not touch on intra-corporate issues. *Elizabeth Sanchez*

SO ALL MAY KNOW
THE FACTS ABOUT THE CASE OF
TSUNEISHI VS. NEGROS NAVIGATION

FACT 2: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF NEGROS NAVIGATION COMPANY (NENACO), ALL OF THICI'S INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL CLIENTS ARE SATISFIED AND LOYAL CUSTOMERS WHO PAY ACCORDING TO AGREED TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

FACT 3: THICI FILED A CASE AGAINST NENACO FOR ONLY ONE REASON: TO COLLECT OVER P 121 MILLION OF UNPAID NENACO DEBT AFTER REPEATED FAILURES TO MAKE GOOD ON NUMEROUS NEGOTIATED EXTENSIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS COVERING A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS.

FACT 4: THICI EXTENDED NENACO FAVORABLE PAYMENT TERMS FROM 8 TO 18 MONTHS VS INDUSTRY PRACTICE OF 3 MONTHS. NENACO CONTINUALLY FAILED TO FULFILL ITS PROMISE TO PAY. IT REFUSED TO SECURITIZE ITS DEBT AND PROVIDE COLLATERAL WITH SOME FORM OF ACCEPTABLE GUARANTY.

FACTUAL DETAILS:

1. Three NENACO vessels (M/V San Sebastian, M/V Princess of Negros, and M/V San Paolo) repaired by Tsuneishi in 2002 have not been fully paid as of April 2004.
2. Two other vessels (M/V Nuestra Señora de Fatima, and M/V St. Peter the Apostle) were due for full payment in 2003 but remain unpaid.
3. On September 27, 2002 THICI and NENACO entered into a Memorandum of Agreement on a repayment schedule. Full payment terms were moved to December 2003. NENACO has not complied. Neither did it respond to payment notices from THICI by telephone, email or fax.
4. On January 23, 2003 after THICI filed a case for non-payment, NENACO through its President/General Manager requested THICI to withdraw the case and promised to pay the full amount by March 2003. THICI agreed on condition that some form of acceptable security be given by NENACO (post-dated checks or Corporate Guaranty from their parent company – Metro Pacific). NENACO refused to provide any such guarantee.
5. Repeated discussions from May 6, 2003 to February 13, 2004 between THICI and NENACO proved fruitless. NENACO did not make any serious offer to settle the accounts.
Despite the sale of its ship M/V Santa Ana, NENACO failed to pay off the balance of that debt amounting to P264,000, which remains outstanding as of April 2004.

PART 3 OF 5 ADVT.

SO ALL MAY KNOW
THE FACTS ABOUT THE CASE OF
TSUNEISHI VS. NEGROS NAVIGATION

FACT 5: : THICI's CASE IS UNDER THE ADMIRALTY COURT WHILE NENACO's CASE IS UNDER THE REHAB COURT. THE STAY ORDER OF THE REHAB COURT DOES NOT HAVE ADMIRALTY JURISDICTION

- Because it claims to be insolvent, NENACO has sought suspension of payments in a rehabilitation court in Manila.
- It claims that an order from this court will protect it from THICI's lawsuit.
- But THICI's maritime suit ***in rem*** against the vessels filed in the Cebu Regional Trial Court sitting in admiralty is not affected by the rehabilitation court's stay order.
- The rehabilitation court does not have admiralty jurisdiction.
- This legal issue is complicated and best left to the proper forum --- the courts----- to address.
- THICI is exercising its fiduciary responsibility to its stakeholders by enforcing its legal rights in accordance with law.
- NENACO could have addressed the claims in court filed by THICI by merely putting up a counter bond or paying the overdue amount of P35 million on the St. Peter the Apostle. It was NENACO'S choice to opt for suspension of payments in a rehabilitation court.

PART 4 OF 5
ADVT

Theme: "New Dimensions in Philippine Fisheries"

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The doomsday weapon

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

ON THE day my article came out last week, there was a record inflow of dollars, $257 million, which caused the peso to appreciate to 55.66 to $1. Governor Buenaventura of the central bank said that the money had been sent by OCWs to pay for tuition fees. To some extent, he was correct. About 25 percent was sent for that purpose but a careful analysis shows that 75 percent came from Syria, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan to pay for 100,000 tons of *bagoong*.

As my article is sent out worldwide on INQ7.net, it was avidly read by members of Al-Queda. They immediately bought up the entire stock of bagoong from the factories in Pangasinan and all the markets and stores in Metro Manila. They have taken the entire output of the Philippines until the end of the year so you may have to buy Vietnamese bagoong, which is not as lethal.

It is good that I did not mention *durian* from Davao. If fired at a tank, it will not destroy it, but will make it uninhabitable for about 2 months. Mixed with bagoong, it is the most lethal combination known to man, and there is no antidote. I think it is mentioned in the Apocalypse.

Because I went to the village last week, I missed the opportunity to play in the Masters with Tiger Woods. Just as well, perhaps, because he did not play to form. Twenty-five years ago, I was much better than he was. I was in my prime and he was only 4. The last time I played in a doubles match in Wack Wack, my partner had a stroke and dropped dead in the bunker. Not only did I have to take his corpse back to the Clubhouse, but also the scorer wanted to add his stroke to my score.

Checkout everything very carefully. I just discovered that my cardiologist was actually a blackjack dealer from Vegas. And my pulmonologist was a waiter for Amtrak in a Pullman car. Even the TV program, Gargoyles, turned out to be an advertisement for Listerine.

A girl stole her sister's SIM card for her cell phone. She felt very guilty about it so she went to confession. She said to the priest, "Forgive me, Father, for I have simmed."

In Athens, in June, one of the events is pole vaulting. In the Philippines, in May, we will have poll vaulting.

* * *

THERE is little to write about the stock market because turnover has dried up. Last Thursday, gross turnover was P400 million, but when you subtract the cross sales, which are internal transactions, net turnover was a pathetic P136 million. And it was not much better on Friday or yesterday.

After my SELL signal to subscribers, the PHISIX fell 5 days in a row, but recovered last Friday when Roco literally backed out. This improves GMA's chances of being elected. Some Roco voters will abstain, most will transfer to GMA and the remainder will go to Ping Lacson. I expect the next survey to show President Arroyo increasing her lead to 7-8 percent. Whichever candidate wins, the market will go higher because both have credibility.

This might force the opposition to settle their differences and unite, but who will step down? If they can find a solution, then it will be a close race. Even Brother Eddie's 2.5 percent could be crucial if he should decide to quit and endorse one of the two remaining candidates.

Faced with all this uncertainty, investors are staying out of the market and who can blame them? Once the election is over, and assuming the loser concedes defeat gracefully, there should be a recovery because the outlook for the Asia-Pacific region is good. Japan has at last emerged from a 12-year recession and is now a big importer of Philippine products. China, the biggest importer, is growing at an incredible 9.7 percent, and the economy is really perking up in the United States. So the outlook for exports, up 7.5 percent, is set fair.

If the peso continues to appreciate after the election, it will help offset further increases in gasoline prices and help keep down inflation, which is on the rise. In the supermarkets, all the prices are being marked up quite sharply, even local products. Gatorade jumped from P22 to P24, an increase of 9 percent.

* * *

IT IS impossible to understand the American stock market. If the economy was growing slowly, few jobs were being created, and company profits were static, the DOW and the NASDAQ would be falling. But the reverse is true. The economy is expected to grow at 4.6 percent without much inflation, a record of 338,000 new jobs were created last month, and profits are up by an average of 21 percent so far this quarter.

So what happens? Because everything is going well, apart from the horrendous $500-billion trade deficit, the NASDAQ is still going down. Even an 89-percent increase in profits was not enough to hold the price of INTEL. Chip stocks have really got the blues. Maybe, that is why they are called blue chips. The DOW is a bit more resilient but only because of the excellent performance of the pharmaceutical companies.

Investors have suddenly become terrified that the FED might start raising rates again and the bond market is in a state of disarray. First of all, the FED will not react to one month's incredible job figures but will wait for further confirmation, as these figures look too good to be true. I am willing to bet that they will not be repeated.

Secondly, even if the FED raises rates from their 40-year low of one percent, it will not be a calamity. Chair Greenspan has read the economy correctly all along, and he will not do anything to bring it crashing down. He is speaking on Tuesday and Wednesday and his remarks will be closely followed. The Beige Book, which indicates the FED's thoughts on the economy, will also be published on Wednesday, so expect some reaction from the stock market.

If he has not acted by July, then he will probably wait until after the election in November because he will not want to take any measures that may be interpreted as political. He has always stayed clear of politics and concentrated on economics. Both parties respect him for that. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

SO ALL MAY KNOW
THE FACTS ABOUT THE CASE OF
TSUNEISHI VS. NEGROS NAVIGATION

FACT 6: THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC CONVENIENCE RESTS WITH THE OPERATOR, NOT WITH THE CREDITOR

- Tsuneishi Heavy Industries should not be faulted for any inconvenience caused by NENACO to the sea-traveling public.
- THICI is a shipbuilder seeking to collect the monies owed to it.
- On the other hand, as a holder of a certificate of public convenience, NENACO is solely responsible for managing its financial and operating affairs, thereby ensuring uninterrupted and safe service to the public.
- As a public carrier, it should assume this responsibility instead of passing the blame to its creditors and suppliers.
- The creditors have already extended financial support to NENACO. This has enabled NENACO to continue operating its vessels. NENACO has a duty to pay its debt.

IN SUMMARY:

- THICI has extended full cooperation to NENACO by providing ship repair services and extended credit terms.
- THICI has every right to be paid.

The Management

Tsuneishi Heavy Industries, Cebu Inc.

PART 5 OF 5
http://www.thici.com/
ADVT

Debt yields flat, higher on poll risks

YIELDS on government debt were confined to a narrow range yesterday as trade focused on four-year and five-year paper and the market stayed cautious about election-related risk.

Dealers said rates moved up or down five to 10 basis points after last week's rally when yields fell after one of President Macapagal-Arroyo's rivals took ill, boosting her chances of winning the May 10 election.

News that the government contained its budget deficit in the first three months of the year helped ease some jitters, dealers said.

The fiscal shortfall fell 18.4 percent in March from a year earlier to P22.28 billion. The three-month budget deficit of P56.847 billion was lower than the target of P58.9 billion.

The four-year treasury bond was dealt at 10.9 percent from the previous session's 10.85 percent. Five-year paper changed hands at 11.325 percent versus 11.25 percent on Friday.

"It's because of the political risk. There is talk that the opposition would unify to challenge (Ms Macapagal), so it's better to be cautious," said one dealer from a local bank.

Reports said deposed President Joseph Estrada would broker negotiations between film star Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson so that the opposition could challenge Ms Macapagal more effectively. *Reuters*

Sy bid . . .

From page B1

last minute, possibly to ward off the group's entry in the board. Depending on how EPCI takes action on its complaint, the SM group may file a lawsuit to nullify whatever shall be the result of today's stockholders' meeting.

Aside from the proxies from the two foreign banks, Francisco also cited the invalidation of proxies given by the San Miguel Corp. Retirement Plan for alleged lack of a secretary's certificate. He said those certificates had already been submitted.

"They claimed the custodian banks had no consent of the shareholders and even if the banks were able to get the written consent, they did not accept it. They railroaded the forum," Francisco said in a separate interview.

In the letter, he pointed out that Standard Chartered's authorized officer had sent confirmation of consent from shareholders. Likewise, he said Citibank had submitted supporting documents for the proxies and specified the number of shares for which a particular proxy was good for.

Also, he said BDO had submitted nominees but EPCI would not say who were the ones qualified and the bank would have no way of knowing until the bank's stockholders' meeting this afternoon.

"In previous elections, this was not the process. This year, they became super strict," Francisco lamented, noting the invalidation of 10 million proxies may have caused BDO to fall below the minimum number needed to vote a director.

The four nominees earlier submitted by BDO were: Exequiel Villacorta, former president of TA Bank; bankers Violeta Lim and Josefina Tan, and Rafael Alunan III, Interior Secretary during the Aquino administration.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 19, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	2,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	5,000
Bank Of The Phil. Islands	44.5	45	44.5	45	280,300
China Banking Corp.	675	675	675	675	100
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39.5	40	39.5	40	22,700
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	10,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24.25	24.25	24	24	64,600
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	5,500
Security Bank Corp.	15.75	16.75	15.75	16.75	200
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	5,700
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	101,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1515	1520	1515	1520	2,340
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	21.75	21.75	21.75	21.75	8,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.67	660,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	860	875	860	870	73,550
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.035	0.034	0.035	1,800,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	100,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.7	7,010,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.34	1.34	1.32	1.34	136,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1055	1065	1055	1060	169,020
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	73,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	2,000
Manila Electric Co. B	28	28	27	27	187,800
Petron Corp.	3.05	3.05	2.95	2.95	1,260,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.98	0.95	0.98	30,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	90,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.9	2.95	2.9	2.95	1,937,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	540,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.66	441,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29	29	29	29	2,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.25	119,700
RFM Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	300,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	210,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	57	64,200
San Miguel Corp. B	72	72	70	70	56,300
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	220,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	450,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	2,075,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.7	150,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	4,960,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	300,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	790,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	1,400,000
Ever-Golesco Resources	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	1,500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	90,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23	23.25	22.75	22.75	564,500
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	10,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	40,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.1	360,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	860,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15	15	15	15	1,900
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	270,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	420,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.24	0.29	0.24	0.24	690,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	235,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22	22	22	22	131,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6	19,898,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.13	2,130,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	390,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	790,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	20,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.195	0.205	0.195	0.2	320,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	79,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	394,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	200,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	10,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	15,000,000

DISCLOSURES

COSMOS Bottling Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 6, 2 p.m. at the executive dining room; SMC head office complex, 40 San Miguel Ave., Mandaluyong City. Record date is on March 19.

* * *

DIVERSIFIED Financial Network Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 2, 3 p.m. at the 3/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. corner 2nd Avenue e Square IT Park SEZ, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, M.M. Record date is April 30.

* * *

WELLEX Industries Inc. postponed the scheduled May 5 annual stockholders' meeting. Date is to be announced later.

* * *

EAST Asia Power Resources Corp. disclosed the resignation of Kurt Lindahl as director.

* * *

UNION Bank of the Phils. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 28, 2 p.m. at the Manila A & B Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La. Registration starts at 1 p.m., and closing of books will be from May 7 to May 27.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Seven Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 8. Record date is April 30.

* * *

BENPRES Holdings Corp. rescheduled its annual stockholders' meeting to June 7. Stockholders of record as of May 3 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

The BOARD of directors of **Robinsons Land Corp.** appointed Johnson Robert L. Go Sr. as vice chair of the company.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Estates Corp. will not be able to hold its annual stockholders' meeting within the time set in its by-laws.

* * *

METRO Alliance Holdings & Equities Corp. authorized chair Renato B. Magadia or director Angel L. Umali to enter into the Share Purchase Agreement with Bataan Polyethylene Corp.

* * *

Elected directors of **Manila Mining Corp.** were Felipe U. Yap, Artemio F. Disini, Charles L. Bradish, Ethelwoldo E. Fernandez, Rene F. Chanyungco, Augusto C. Villaluna and Bryan U. Yap. ***Compiled by Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

April 19, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.833611204	1.000000	55.7650
Japan	Yen	0.007741	0.009286	0.5178
United Kingdom	Pound	1.498666	1.797800	100.2543
Hongkong	Dollar	0.106898	0.128235	7.1510
Switzerland	Franc	0.643964	0.772499	43.0784
Canada	Dollar	0.619647	0.743329	41.4517
Singapore	Dollar	0.497322	0.596588	33.2687
Australia	Dollar	0.620108	0.743882	41.4826
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.211229	2.652590	147.9217
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.222291	0.266660	14.8703
Brunei	Dollar	0.495843	0.594813	33.1697
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000116	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.02118	0.025407	1.4168
UAE	Dirham	0.226969	0.272272	15.1832
Euro	Euro	1	1.199600	66.8957
Argentina	Peso	0.296132	0.355240	19.8100
Brazil	REAL	0.28676	0.343997	19.1830
Denmark	Kroner	0.134336	0.161150	8.9865
India	Rupee	0.01905	0.022852	1.2743
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219401	0.263193	14.6770
Mexico	New Peso	0.074033	0.088810	4.9525
New Zealand	Dollar	0.532999	0.639386	35.6554
Norway	Kroner	0.120906	0.145039	8.0881
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014791	0.017743	0.9894
South Africa	Rand	0.12987	0.155792	8.6877
Korea	Won	0.000718	0.000861	0.0480
Sweden	Kroner	0.108765	0.130475	7.2759
Syria	Pound	0.018869	0.022635	1.2622
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025368	0.030432	1.6970
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000435	0.000522	0.0291

Trisco: reinforced strength, renewed competency

WITH four decades of unparalleled performance to its credit, one of the country's progressive insurance providers celebrates its well-deserved triumph with its best reward - the unflagging satisfaction of its loyal clientele and the respect and good standing accorded by its financial allies.

This year, Travellers Insurance & Surety Corp (Trisco) reaffirms its stature as one of the country's established non-life insurance companies. The company is specifically engaged in providing fire, marine, bonds, casualty, contractors' all risk, fidelity guarantee, commercial blanket bonds and floater policy insurance.

Trisco has come a long way since its humble beginnings four decades ago. From a meager P500,000 in start-up capital in September 1964, it now boasts of P50 million in paid-up capital - with a current total net worth of P103 million. To further bolster its competitive edge in the industry, Trisco is increasing its authorized capital stocks to P250 million during the first half of the current year.

The company attributes its remarkable growth rate to its alliance with such respected financial institutions such as the Development Bank of the Philippines, Land Bank of the Philippines, I-Bank, GSIS and other government agencies.

Last October 2003, Trisco underwent a major turnaround when it was acquired by its new management team headed by its incumbent president, lawyer Alejandro V. Malong, whose management skills and legal expertise in corporate, taxation and the labor sectors were honed, through his stint with the prestigious Price Waterhouse-Coopers Worldwide Organization, a top consulting firm in the world.

The new management implemented imperative measures to enhance Trisco's operational efficiency and refueled its marketing machinery. The full automation of its operations (sales and underwriting, accounting and claims processing) proved to be the key factor in beefing up the company's productivity. With the installation of its Unix and Informix-based de facto operating systems, Trisco management noticed a remarkable speed-up in its claims processing time, as well as its employees' overall productivity. In its bid to step further ahead in the technology race, Trisco has earmarked a substantial budget towards the acquisition of a Solaris- and Informix version 9.0-based operating system to be more aggressive in servicing its clients' needs. The completion of its website will also facilitate better client-agent communication.

Despite the intensive focus on technology, Trisco gives as much emphasis on its 'human element' - its esteemed group of agents who undergo progressive training to hone their skills. To date, the company boasts of a steady inflow of new recruits and regular agents who enjoy such incentives as productivity-based subsidies and hefty sales commissions.

Trisco is all set and in full swing to make a mark in the industry, starting the year with a tie up with two leading Asian companies: the Singapore-based Asia Pacific Capital & Remittance Co., and the Hongkong-based Asia Pacific Services Ltd. The new alliance firms up Trisco's role as a key provider of Personal Accident Insurance to overseas contract workers and their beneficiaries in the Philippines.

Now on its 40th year, Trisco aims to gain further recognition as one of the prominent players in the industry. As part of its long-term plans, the company envisions the opening of branches in key cities all over the country as well as in neighboring Asian countries.

PROSS-PACK JOINS ASIAFOOD EXPO 2004

Pross-Pack Corporation will join AsiaFood Expo 2004, the 13th International Exposition on Food Processing, Packaging, Handling Machinery, Equipment and Technology on Sept. 1 to 4 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila. Signing the agreement were Jonathan Gee, president and general manager of Pross-Pack and Annie Bersaluna, trade promotions director of Trade Information Marketing and Exhibitions Inc, organizer of AsiaFood Expo. Witnessing the agreement were (from left) Maybel Calupig and Muriel Estrada, both trade promotions officer of Trade Information Marketing and Exhibitions Inc; Gerlie Merto, sales and marketing; and Mel Rodriguez, marketing manager of Pross-Pack Corp. Pross-Pack Corp is a specialist of all packaging needs, handling food, industrial and pharmaceutical processing, packaging and coding equipment.

Introducing Maybank Premier1

HIGHER interest. Easy reconciliation. Automatic fund transfer. Plus exciting discounts and privileges and insurance protection. Maybank gives you everything you need in a checking account with the new Premier1.

Maybank Premier1 is an interest-bearing checking account that earns you money higher interests depending on your ending daily balance. It allows account holders to enjoy hassle-free and easy account reconciliation as it comes with an exclusive record book that provides a detailed information of the daily transactions made, including itemized entries of inclearing checks. No need to maintain two separate accounts, no need for fund transfers, no need to wait for monthly statements. Everything is packaged into 1 complete and convenient account.

An added plus to the Maybank Premier1 is that account holders are offered the option to apply for a premium ATM Maybankard for easy account access. They also get to enjoy discounts and privileges from partner establishments like restaurants, hotels and other specialty shops by simply flashing the Premier1 ATM card, thus giving more value for money. Account holders are even covered by a personal accident insurance worth 5x his ADB or up to P500,000. The account can also be enrolled for ADDLink, a Maybank service facility that enables regular transfer of funds from one CASA account (benefactor account) to another CASA account (beneficiary account) either monthly or quarterly.

Introduced to the market late last year, the Maybank Premier1 is just one of the newest product offerings of Maybank Phils geared towards the retail market segment. Maybank Phils is a member of the Maybank Group, the biggest banking group in Malaysia with over $42 billion in assets. Maybank is among the Asia's top 20 banks and one of the top 130 banks in te world and has established presence in 12 countries, including key financial centers like New York, London and Singapore.

UN ADVISORY BOARD ON WATER AND SANITATION

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has used this year's observance of World Water Day to announce the establishment of an Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, to galvanize global action on these issues, which are central to the world's hopes of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. The Secretary-General has asked the board to use the unique expertise of its members to raise awareness of water and sanitation issues, to help mobilize funds for water and sanitation projects, and to encourage new partnerships. Dr. Olivia laO' Castillo, chair and president of Asia Pacific Roundtable for Cleaner Production, is one of the members of the board.

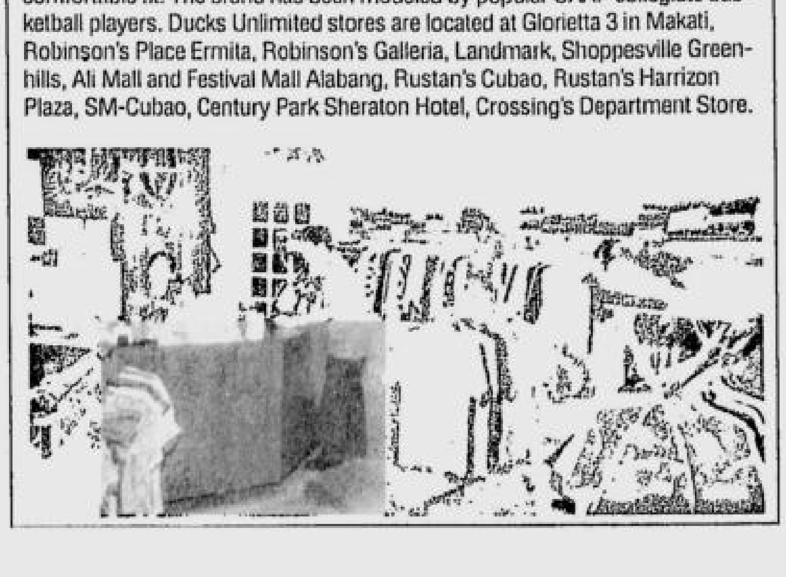
GLOBAL BRANDS HOLDS COMPANY BLESSING

Global Brands Co Inc held its company blessing last March 5. They are now located at 35th Flr. Raffles Corporate Center, Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Shown during the ribbon cutting ceremony are the officers (from left): Ray Silvestre N. Canilao, managing director for fashionable goods division; Marian C. Pineda, chief finance officer; and Roy Theodore G. Villafuerte, managing director for chemical formulations division.

Product FILES

Ducks Unlimited launches new promo

DUCKS Unlimited has just launched a new discount promo as a summer treat for all its loyal customers. Entitled " Ducks it's Friday!", you can avail of 20 percent discount on every item, every Friday: April 23 for underwear, April 30 for children wear, May 7 for khaky pants, and May 14 for socks. The "Ducks it's Friday" is ongoing at all Ducks Unlimited stores. Ducks Unlimited is a locally-manufactured line of shirts, pants, underwear, shorts and jackets for men, women and children, made of 100 percent Egyptian cotton for that cool and comfortable fit. The brand has been modeled by popular UAAP collegiate basketball players. Ducks Unlimited stores are located at Glorietta 3 in Makati, Robinson's Place Ermita, Robinson's Galleria, Landmark, Shoppesville Greenhills, Ali Mall and Festival Mall Alabang, Rustan's Cubao, Rustan's Harrizon Plaza, SM-Cubao, Century Park Sheraton Hotel, Crossing's Department Store.



Bits & Clips

Working Moms play

CELEBRATE your being a working mom and discover solutions to some of your workplace and parenting concerns through a unique office tour featuring the popular improv comedy group Spit (the Silly People's Improv Theater). Moms at Play, the office tour, is fast becoming a byword among parents in the corporate scene nowadays. On April 23 at 3 p.m., the pioneering office tour will be with the working parents of Philam Plan, on the ground floor of the Philam Life Building, U.N. Avenue. On April 24, at 9 a.m., Working Mom will hold a workshop on "Can You Discipline Your Child and Still Be Friends?" Guest speaker is Alex Mallare, a family counselor and Working Mom parenting member.

CMDF calendar of events

THE CONSTRUCTION Manpower Development Foundation (CMDF) is pleased to inform its clients, partners and other government institutions its training schedule for the 2nd quarter of 2004. They are also informing the public of their new office at the 2nd floor, Oppen Bldg. 349 Gil Puyat Ave. Makati City. For registration and other inquiries, contact Leni Baldorado at tel. nos. 890-5333 loc. 614, 759-2312, 815-1151.

BayanTel summer promo

CAPTURE your best summer moments with a Kodak camera for free courtesy of BayanTel. For a minimum of P650 worth of calls to any cellphone or NDD calls to a landline on your BayanTel phone from April 1 to 30, you will be entitled to receive for free the Kodak disposable underwater and sports camera. To avail, simply present your statement of account for the month of April 2004 together with a proof of payment or official receipt and any valid ID to any BayanCenter in Metro Manila. The free Kodak camera is available until June 30, and can be availed by Metro Manila residential subscribers only.

La Corona summer packages

LA CORONA Pagsanjan Resorts is currently offering its "Fun and Adventurous Summer" packages. Choose from: the Pagsajan Falls Package - enjoy the majestic view of Pagsanjan river, while shooting the rapids; Riverside Picnic Package - delight in the mouth watering native dishes served along Pagsanjan river; View from the Top Picnic and Mini Trekking Package - trek in La Corona's 4.5 hectare natural woods and forests and experience a native banquet overlooking Pagsanjan river and Caliraya lake; and/or Camping and Outdoor Challenge Package - engage in the outdoor challenge courses and end the day with a camping stint. For rates and more information, call La Corona's sales office at 525-8274, 524-2631, 0918-9397609 and look for Vangie or Lia.

St. Teodora summer fun

ST. TEODORA School and Tutorial Center, has come up with fun summer activities for kids 5 to 12 years old. The fun starts April 19, up to May 14, in the afternoons (M-W-F). There are three classes for parents to choose from for their kids enjoyment: arts and crafts, basic drawing and coloring, and English conversation. Each is composed of 12 sessions. Tuition are P2,500, P2,000 and P2,400 respectively. Classes are conducted in air-conditioned rooms. For inquiries visit St. Teodora School and Tutorial Center, 3rd floor, 1426 Ext., Tondo or call them at tel. nos. 252-8972, 251-7950.

Cocoplans hires new FVP

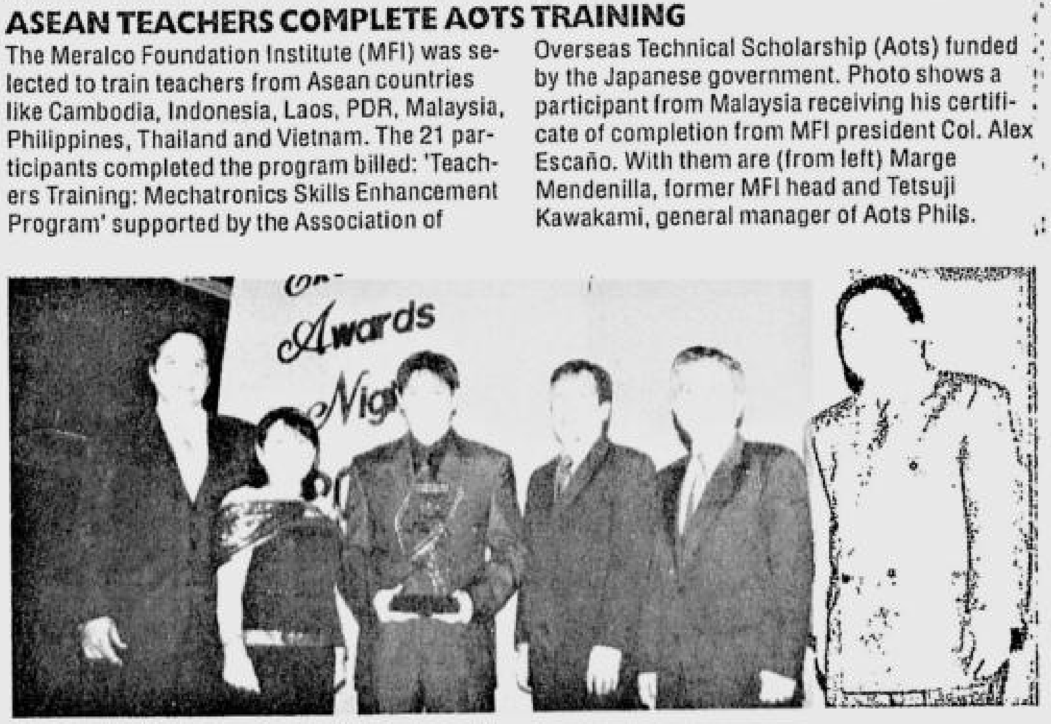
IN ITS quest to achieve bigger sales targets, Cocoplans Inc, the pre-need company of the UCPB Group, has appointed Rolando Ramos as first vice president for national sales and marketing effective Dec. 8, 2003. His presence had helped a lot in the improvement of Cocoplans sales. Ramos is a Commerce graduate major in Marketing at the San Sebastian College. He is currently taking his MBA studies at the Ateneo Graduate School of Business.

BPI, U RUSTAN'S INK MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

The Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) and U Rustan's recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement that will allow BPI Edge cardholders, to enjoy a 15 percent discount at U Rustan's among others. Shaking hands are Joel Tantoco, division manager of Rustan Commercial Corp, and Teresita Tan, SVP of BPI flanked by (from left) Ma. Luisa Ramirez, marketing services manager of Rustan Commercial Corp, manager Juancho Calayan and assistant manager Anya Katigbak-Cajucom of BPI. Aside from 15 percent discount, U Rustan's will also sponsor sale events exclusively for BPI Edge cardholders giving them the first to view their new collections.

ASEAN TEACHERS COMPLETE AOTS TRAINING

The Meralco Foundation Institute (MFI) was selected to train teachers from Asean countries like Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The 21 participants completed the program billed: 'Teachers Training: Mechatronics Skills Enhancement Program' supported by the Association of Overseas Technical Scholarship (Aots) funded by the Japanese government. Photo shows a participant from Malaysia receiving his certificate of completion from MFI president Col. Alex Escaño. With them are (from left) Marge Mendenilla, former MFI head and Tetsuji Kawakami, general manager of Aots Phils.



FEA 2003 INTERNATIONAL MASTER FRANCHISE OF THE YEAR

Marks and Spencer, an icon in British retailing, has been awarded the International Master Franchise of the Year for Retail at the recently-held Franchise Excellence Awards (FEA) 2003 led by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) secretary Cesar Purisima (right). Rustan Marketing Specialist Inc (RMSI) is the brand's exclusive franchisee in the Philippines. Receiving the award are Michael Huang of Rustan Marketing Corp and Steven Sarmenta, general manager, RMSI (third and fourth from left) together with (from left) Senator Robert Jaworski; Bing Limjoco, PFA president; and Samie Lim, PFA chair and vice chair for Asia, World Franchise Council. FEA is the only seal of recognition given out by the DTI and the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) to franchise companies who have excelled in their respective fields and have exemplified the best ethical practices in their operations.

SOGO Home & Office Center

Check out the Cool Appliance Fest at the upper ground floor of Ali Mall (near Gen. Romulo Ave. entrance) in Araneta Center, Cubao in Quezon City.

COOL Appliance Fest

SPEND cool times with the family right at home this summer with great appliance deals from Sogo Home & Office Center.

And for this season, check out the Cool Appliance Fest at the upper ground floor of Ali Mall (near Gen. Romulo Ave. entrance) in Araneta Center, Cubao in Quezon City.

Ongoing until May 5, 2004, this cool event showcases the best brands in home appliances at the best deals.

Choose from a wide range of videocams, flat TVs, DVD home theater systems, air conditioners, refrigerators and other appliances that will surely make this summer a cooler season for the whole family.

Plus, you can avail of the latest models from **Carrier, Condura, JVC, Kolin, LG, Panasonic, Philips, Pioneer, Samsung and Toshiba at 0 % interest through major credit cards.**

No need to sweat it out this summer. Visit Sogo Home & Office Center's Cool Appliance Fest and discover new and better ways to enjoy the season!

Double the Treat, Double the Value!

YOUR neighbor is cooling off with a new air conditioner from Automatic Centre or Sogo, right?

Chances are, he's already enjoying the ongoing Double Treat Offer!

You can also get a chance to enjoy a double treat this summer. Just buy selected Carrier, Condura, Kolin and Panasonic air conditioners.. You'll not only get a free electric fan, you'll also be given a **FREE Automatic Centre or Sogo gift certificate** which you could use on your next visit to the store. That's two free items to make your summer twice as cool!

Free Cable TV subscriptions from SkyCable and Home Cable

SUMMER has never been this cool!

With Automatic Centre, you'll get to chill out at home watching your favorite shows on cable TV. Because until April 30, you can get a FREE cable TV subscription from SkyCable and Home Cable!

Every purchase of any flat TV, projection TV, plasma TV or a DVD Home Theater System entitles you to a SkyCable or Home Cable one-month cable TV subscription absolutely FREE! Now you can enjoy watching great movies, sitcoms, dramas and other TV programs on your brand new flat-screen TV in you own home.

Escape the Heat

Coolest deals this summer with the lowest prices, guaranteed! Only from Automatic Centre and SOGO

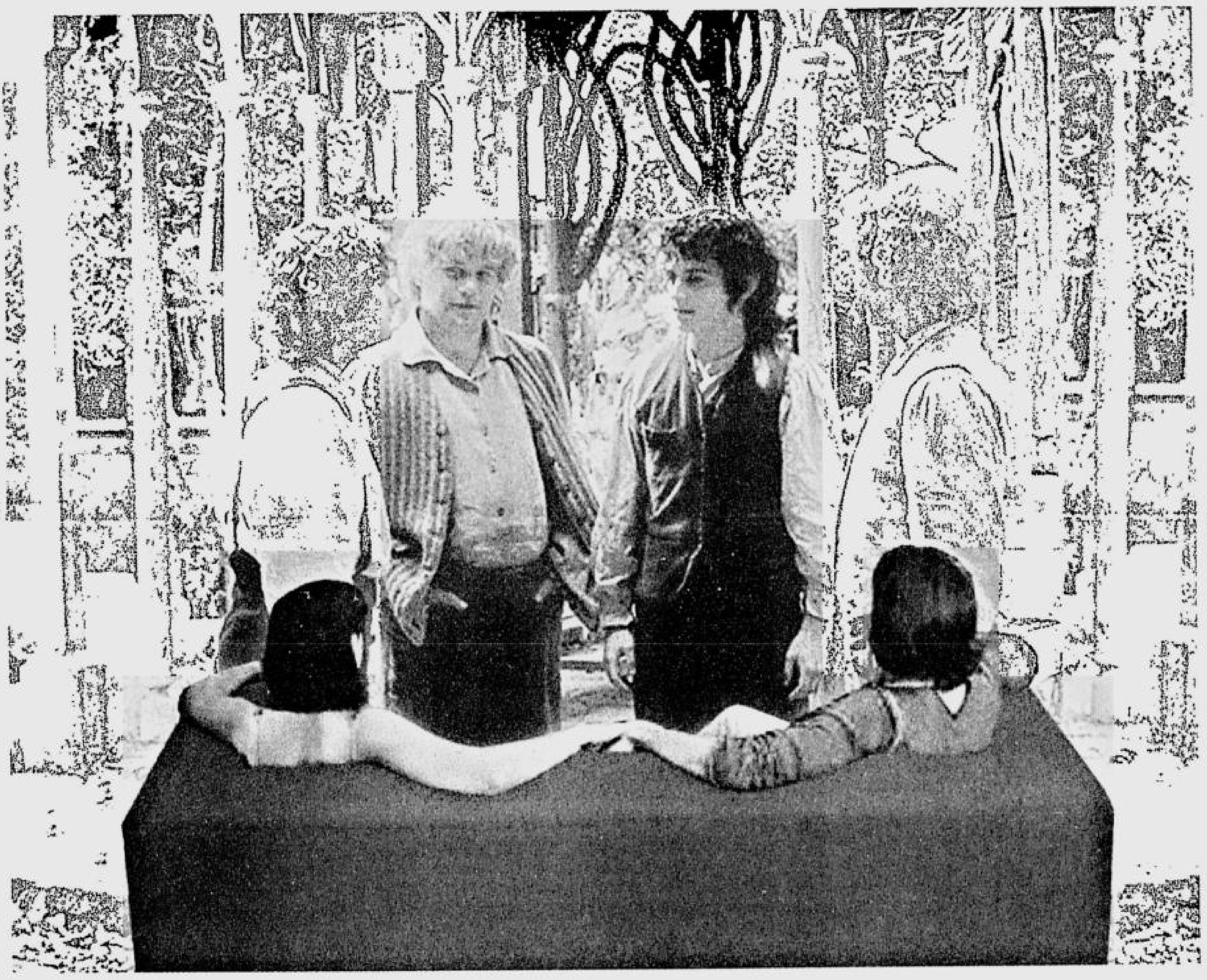
Wanna buy something to literally "cool" you this summer at a very affordable? Then get the following cool deals from Automatic Centre and SOGO.

For your refrigerator needs, you can have an LG personal ref at only P6,795 or a Kelvinator 7 cu. ft. ref at only P8,595.

For bigger freezer capacity, get a Whirlpool chest type freezer at P16,950. Or you can opt for big refs such as Samsung (P15,995), White Westinghouse (P18,900), and Sharp (P20,990).

And that air conditioner that you only dream about, then dream no more because you can have an LG air conditioner at P7,995, a Kolin window type air con at P13,125, a Carrier window type aircon at P15,775, or a Panasonic window type air con at P17,799.

LG
LG
Digitally yours



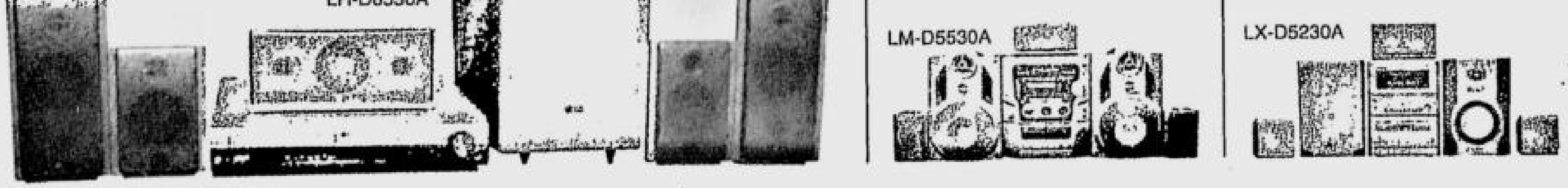
LG Life's Good

The new LG DVD Home Cinema Series.
Sounds so real you'll think you're part of the movie.

LORD OF THE RINGS
FREE!
LOTR 1 (limited edition) 2 disc DVD for every purchase of any of the LG DVD Home Cinema series!

Promo period is from March 9-July 31, 2004
at all leading appliance stores and dealers nationwide.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1030, Series of 2004.



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Built-in Dolby Digital 5.1, Dolby Pro Logic I & II and DTS Decoders • DVD, VCD, MP3, CD-R/RW, DVD/ RW, SVCD-VCD, WMA compatible • Kodak picture CD, JPEG

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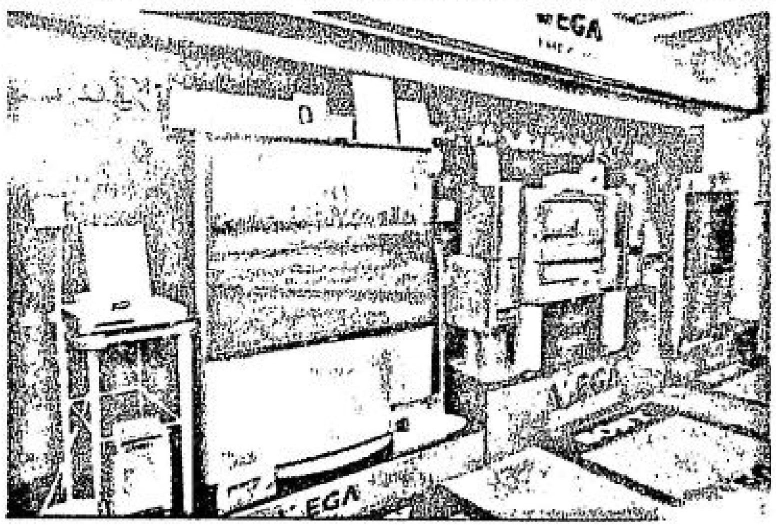
Automatic CENTRE

Irresistible home entertainment summer fest!

Enjoy zero percent deals on home entertainment appliances at Automatic Centre's "Home Entertainment Summer Fest @ Glorietta 4," up to May 16.



Automatic CENTRE
HOME ENTERTAINMENT Summer FEST
@Glorietta 4
JVC LG Panasonic Whirlpool
PHILIPS Pioneer SONY
JBL DENON Harman Kardon
Tel: 7296450/51/52

WHAT will make the hot summer an enjoyable period for people who want to stay home rather than head for the beach?

Definitely it will be relaxing in a nice comfy couch watching DVD movies on a flat screen TV hooked on a system with super all-around speakers that can send ripples off the walls. Not to mention, of course, the excellent feel of a cool room courtesy of a new airconditioner. And while enjoying the home cinema, one's appetite is being pampered by fresh and chilled foodstuff from a new ref.

You can make your summer an event to cherish by getting all these cool home entertainment systems and products from Automatic Centre's "Home Entertainment Summer Fest" at the third level of Glorietta 4, happening until May 16.

With Automatic Centre's irresistible summer home entertainment festival, you can get delightful zero percent deals on a myriad of fabulous home appliances. Spend a more relaxing break at home with the best brands in flat and projection TVs, DVD home theater systems, mini components, air conditioners, refrigerators, and more.

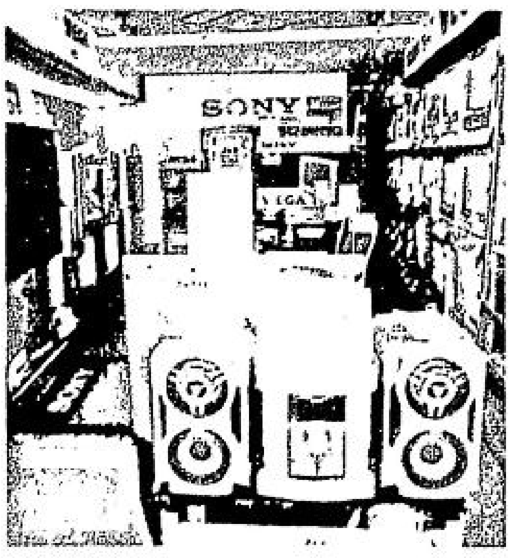
Make your home a summer destination of choice with the latest appliances from JVC, LG, Panasonic, Philips, Pioneer, Sony and Whirlpool. Get also amazing audio-video systems from JBL, Denon and Harman Kardon. Plus, enjoy zero percent installment plans through all major credit cards.

What's so exciting about Automatic Centre's "Home Entertainment Summer Fest" is a free cable TV subscription from SkyCable and Home Cable for one month. Of course, you can avail this one for every purchase of any flat TV, projection TV, plasma TV or a DVD Home Theater System. Take note that the free cable TV subscription is transferable if you already have a Home Cable or SkyCable TV subscription.

At the "Home Entertainment Summer Fest," enjoy the ongoing "Double Treat Offer" where you can get a free electric fan when you purchase selected Carrier, Condura, Kolin and Panasonic air conditioners. You can also get a free Automatic Centre or Sogo gift certificate which you could use on your next purchase at any Automatic Centre or Sogo branch.

Best of all, with Automatic Centre's Money-Back Guarantee, you're price-protected for 14 days from the date of purchase. If within two weeks from your purchase date you find the same item offered at a lower price somewhere else, the price difference will be refunded to you. With Automatic Centre, you're assured that the most affordable cash prices are offered on all appliances on display. And with the Warranty Plus option, you can extend your appliance's one-year factory warranty up to five years. Pay only once and choose the additional coverage you want.

Make your summer a treat to you and your family and rush to Automatic Centre's "Home Entertainment Summer Fest."



PARTICIPATING BRANDS

DENON
HARMAN KARDON
JBL
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PANASONIC
PHILIPS
PIONEER
SONY
WHIRLPOOL

SONY
Cyber-shot

Sony Cyber-shot
HIGH 5.0

DSC-T1
- Ultra-slim design
- Carl Zeiss Vario-Tessar Lens
- Hybrid 2.5" LCD

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DSC-P10
- 3x Optical Zoom
- Smart Zoom
- InfoLithium Battery

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5.0 MegaPixel

DSC-V1
- Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar Lens
- Nightshot / NightFraming
- Manual Functions

P40,999

DSC-F717
- Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar Lens
- Hot Shoe Adapter for external flash
- Nightshot

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DSC-P92
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Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

EN BANC

IN RE: THE ACCREDITATION OF THE MINDANAO ALLIED FORCES, INC., AS THE COMELEC CITIZENS' ARM IN THE 2004 NATIONAL ELECTION FOR FREE, HONEST, PEACEFUL, AND ORDERLY ELECTION UNDER PROJECT BANTAY BALOTA

SPP NO. 03-158
Promulgated: April 16, 2004

MINDANAO ALLIED FORCES INC.,
Petitioner.
x - x

Sadain, M. K., Commissioner:

RESOLUTION

This petition was filed by Mindanao Allied Forces, Inc. on December 10, 2003 seeking accreditation as the Commission's citizens arm in "Mindanao and in the Muslim areas." The appropriate filing and legal research fees were paid by petitioner also on December 10, 2003 as evidenced by O.R. No. 7850-469.

Petitioner is a non-stock, non-government organization duly incorporated with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and holds office at Andamra Bldg., 189 Quezon Avenue, Marawi City. Most of the members are from the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Palawan and Basilan. Petitioner also submitted its organizational chart and the corresponding list of officers.

The petitioner desires to undertake the following specific activities:

1. Translate into the vernaculars COMELEC issuances on the conduct of the elections and to ensure free, honest, and orderly elections.
2. Conduct seminars and teach-in for their Bantay Balota Volunteers;
3. Prepare posters and flyers on the conduct of free and honest elections.
4. Hold meetings and dialogue with candidates of various political parties and with police and military personnel to ensure commitments and support for free and honest elections, under the eyes of the Commission on Elections.
5. Undertake information drives.
6. Submit, update and provide reports to the COMELEC.

Upon orders from the Commission pursuant to Section 4, Rule 33 of the Comelec Rules of Procedure, Mindanao Allied Forces, Inc. caused the publication of their petition in a newspaper of general circulation, at their own expense on January 16, 2004.

On January 27, 2004 this Commission issued an Order submitting the instant case for resolution. On January 30, 2004, petitioner submitted its Formal Offer of Evidence.

In accrediting the National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) as citizen's arm of the Commission, we already explained the rationale and purpose of accreditation of citizens' arm. Thus:

> The rationale for accreditation of citizens' arms is the promotion and enhancement of the constitutional task of the COMELEC to ensure free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections. Towards this end, B.P. Blg. 881, otherwise known as the Omnibus Election Code, provides:
>
> **"Sec. 52. Powers and Functions of the Commission on Elections. - In addition to the powers and functions conferred upon it by the Constitution, the Commission shall have exclusive charge of the enforcement and administration of all laws relative to the conduct of elections for the purpose of ensuring free, orderly and honest elections, and shall:**
>
> **(k) Enlist non-partisan groups or organizations of citizens from the civic, youth, professional, educational, business or labor sectors known for their probity, impartiality and integrity with the membership and capability to undertake a coordinated operation and activity to assist it in the implementation of the provisions of this Code and the resolutions, orders and instructions of the Commission for the purpose of ensuring free, orderly and honest elections in any constituency. Such groups or organizations shall function under the direct and immediate control and supervision of the Commission..."**
>
> In the accreditation for the May 14, 2001 elections, the Commission spelled out clearly the purpose of the accreditation of a citizens' arm in this wise:

"The foregoing provisions of law likewise show that accreditation is both discretionary and desirable on the part of the Commission, which when granted, constitutes a privilege and a duty rather than a right, to be responsibly exercised by the accredited citizens' arm. As such, both the law and COMELEC rules provide the guideposts by which the COMELEC may judiciously exercise this discretion and lessen its workload through accreditation. This much can also be discerned from Rule 33, Section 1 of the COMELEC Rules of Procedure, which provides:

> **Section 1. Who may be accredited as citizens' arms of the Commission. – Any *bona fide* non partisan group, association or organization from the civic, youth, professional, educational, business or labor sectors with identifiable leadership, membership and structure, and with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and assist the Commission in the performance of its functions and activities as mandated by the Constitution and by law, may be accredited as citizens' arm of the Commission.**

Simply stated, the main purpose of accreditation is to have a group of concerned and non-partisan citizens assisting the Commission in the performance of its mandate. It is not, and has never been, the intent of the law to accredit citizens' arms to serve as watchdogs of the COMELEC as an institution, as if the COMELEC is, from the very start, suspect in the commission of election fraud. Any such accredited citizens' arm does not acquire the prerogative to act as a watchdog to the COMELEC, for to even entertain such an idea is to negate and demolish the constitutional provisions that hail the independence of the COMELEC as a constitutional body.

For this reason, the COMELEC is committed to discharge its mandate, powers and functions to the best of its ability, with integrity and honesty. In the exercise of the power to accredit citizens' arms, it likewise wields 'direct and immediate control and supervision' over such accredited groups as provided for in Sec. 52 (k) of the Omnibus Election Code."

With the foregoing in mind, the Commission undertook a basic perusal and evaluation of the submissions of the petitioner. The record shows that petitioner submitted a copy of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between petitioner and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) to "prove that the organization has a track record to engage in civic and humanitarian activities to make the country a better place to live for all of us and the incoming generations as it is now in the instant petition marked as EXHIBIT '6'."

The pertinent portions of PDEA Director General Anselmo S. Avenido, Jr.'s letter provides:

> "This has reference to your letters to this Agency, dated June 21, 2003 and to various government agencies all dated June 16, 2003 which have been indorsed to us, signifying your intention to become PDEA's partner in the government's anti-drug campaign and proposing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the PDEA and the Mindanao Allied Forces, INC. (MAF) on the matter.
>
> Please be informed that we have reviewed and considered the provisions of the proposed MOA. We certainly welcome your offer to support our anti-drug campaign. However, due to limited resources, we regret to inform you that we cannot allocate the required office spaces, funds and logistics which you believe are necessary for your mobilization and other activities as provided for in Article 1 of your proposal. Nevertheless, we are submitting our proposed revised MOA for your consideration, wherein the PDEA undertakes to make available our resource speakers during MAF-sponsored lectures/symposia, provide information materials, and act with dispatch on information regarding drug personalities. [Underscoring supplied]
>
> Thank you very much for your offer to support the government's fight against drug trafficking and abuse."

Attached to the PDEA Director General's letter was his two-page proposed revised Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) adverted to by petitioner in its petition. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) submitted by the petitioner Mindanao Allied Forces, Inc. and marked as Exhibit "6" in its Formal Offer of Evidence enumerates petitioner's duties as follows:

1. Assist the PDEA in information / data gathering on illegal activities through 'Operation: Private Eye';
2. Organize and coordinate meetings, lectures and seminars on ill-effects of dangerous drugs; and
3. Assist the PDEA in harnessing active community involvement in the anti-drug campaign.

In the case at bar, petitioner has sufficiently shown that it possesses the relevant track record which may be used as a basis for the Commission to reasonably expect from petitioner a demonstrated "capability to undertake a coordinated operation and activity to assist it in the implementation of the provisions of this Code and the resolutions, orders and instructions of the Commission" as mandated in Sec. 52 (k) of the Omnibus Election Code. The Commission is grateful that civic-minded organizations are generous and civic-minded enough to share in the responsibility of maintaining clean and honest elections in this country.

Finding the petition for accreditation as citizens' arm meritorious, therefore, the Commission accredits petitioner, in connection with the national and local elections on 10 May 2004, to do the following functions and duties of accredited citizens' arm, as provided in section 52 of the Omnibus Election Code, as amended and other election laws:

1. Assist the Commission in the voter's education campaign by translating into the vernacular or prevailing local dialects the COMELEC resolutions, orders and decisions relative to the forthcoming elections and help in the dissemination of the same.
2. Assist the Commission in the voter's education campaign by translating into the vernacular or prevailing local dialects the salient features of the Omnibus Election Code, as amended and undertake an information campaign of the same.
3. Prepare posters and flyers, including its vernacular or prevailing local dialect equivalents, formulated to instill and bring about the conduct of free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections, to be posted or distributed only at appropriate places.
4. Conduct meetings and / or dialogues with candidates or representatives of various political parties, the police, and the military, to gain support for and ensure the attainment of their commitments for free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections.
5. Report to the Commission violations of the provisions of the Omnibus Election Code on the conduct of political campaign, election propaganda and electoral expenditures.
6. Perform such other functions as may be entrusted to such group or organization by the Commission.

Subject to the following conditions:

a) That it shall be subject to the direct and immediate control of the Commission and shall comply with all lawful orders of the Commission in the performance of its specific functions and activities as provided in Section 52 (k), Omnibus Election Code, and such other functions and activities which the Commission may assign to it;
b) That it shall be non-partisan and impartial during the election period;
c) That it shall not be under the influence whatsoever of any foreign government corporation, or entity and shall not solicit or receive, directly or indirectly, any condition or aid of whatever form or nature from any foreign government, corporation or entity, and that neither shall said organization nor any or its members seek to achieve its objective or programs through violence, or aim to propagate any ideology opposed to the principles of a republican and democratic government;
d) That it shall undertake to police its ranks and prevent infiltration by persons or group of persons who may, directly or indirectly, destroy its character impartiality;
e) That it shall submit to the Commission a list of its responsible officials and other officers constituting its board and there shall be no changes therein without the approval of the Commission;
f) That it shall make available to the Commission its personnel, facilities, equipment, papers and effects and coordinate its activity with other accredited citizens' arm of the Commission;
g) That it shall submit written a report every two (2) weeks of its operations for the 10 May 2004 elections and a final written report one month after election day;
h) That it shall not use the Commission's name to misrepresent itself as an official representative, or any of its activities as an official activity, of the Commission; and
i) That this accreditation shall be deemed automatically revoked in case it violates any of the conditions herein set forth.

However, since the Commission has already granted accreditation to the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) and the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) to help secure the vote nationwide, it is best that Mindanao Allied Forces, Inc. be accredited as citizens' arm for Mindanao only considering that its membership and activities are primarily concentrated in that area. In fact, it has designated Regional Directors for six (6) regions in Mindanao and the only other listed Regional Director is for Palawan province. Hence, Mindanao Allied Forces, Inc. must focus their operations and activities as citizens' arm only in the Mindanao area so as not to dissipate its efforts and resources.

As to petitioner's mention of a "Project Bantay Balota," the Commission hereby rules that it has already granted poll watching functions to NAMFREL and PPCRV, hence, petitioner is advised to affiliate with the two (2) citizens' arms with respect to poll watching functions in the Mindanao area.

The Executive Director of this Commission in coordination with the Clerk of Court of the Commission shall implement this Resolution immediately upon its promulgation, furnishing copies thereof to all field officers in Mindanao, including the candidates and the political parties or coalition of political parties, the other citizens' arms (NAMFREL and PPCRV), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the Department of National Defense (DND).

The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation.

SO ORDERED

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

RUFINO S B. JAVIER
Commissioner

MEHOL K. SADAIN
Commissioner

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

VIRGILIO O. GARCILLIANO
Commissioner

MANUEL A. BARCELONA JR.
Commissioner

CERTIFICATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the conclusions in the foregoing resolution were reached in consultation among members of the Commission En Banc before the case was assigned to the writer of the opinion of the Commission.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

(PDI – April 20, 2004)

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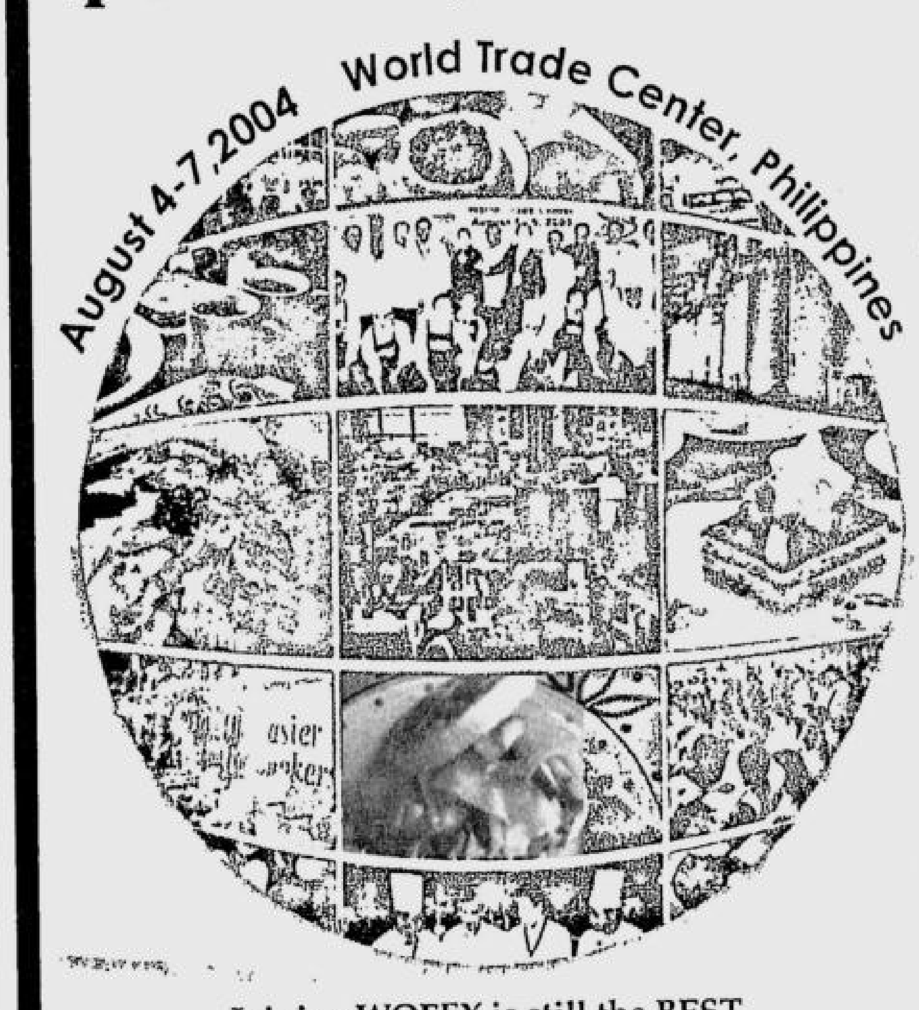

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of PLACIDO NERA has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 269; Page No. 55, Book No. XIX; Series of 2004 of Notary Public for Makati City Atty. Nazario Regino
(PDI-April 6,13 & 20, 2004)

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE is given that the estate of the late **PEDRO DELOS REYES** was extrajudicially settled with waiver among his heirs before Not. Public Hector B. Centeno as per Doc #84, Page 17, Book 1035. Series of 2004.
(PDI-April 6. 13 & 20. 2004)

Notice is hereby given of the loss of Univ of East Cert Nos. 5311, 6880, 7734, 8700, 9800, 10959, all in the name of Victor A. Arches (17 shares), Cert Nos 5310, 6879, 7733, 8699, 9799, 10958, all in the name of Minda N. Arches (17 shares) and Cert Nos. 5330, 6064, 6212, 6881, 7735, 8701, 9801, 10960, 12073, 12754, 13605, all in the name of Victor A. Arches and/or Minda N. Arches (67 shares) Should no one contest after one year new certificates will be issued.
(PDI-April 6, 13, 20 & 27, 2004)

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RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DETAILED ENGINEERING DESIGN FOR ROAD NETWORK AND UTILITIES OF THE PORO POINT COMMERCIAL COMPLEX

The Poro Point Management Corporation (PPMC) invites interested Consulting Firms to submit Application for Eligibility and subsequently to bid, if eligible, for the conduct of a detailed engineering design of the Road Network and Utilities of the Poro Point Commercial Complex, Poro Point Special Economic and Freeport Zone, Poro, San Fernando City, La Union.

Interested Consulting Firms should have completed contracts similar to the above services.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of P3,000,000.00 shall come from PPMC corporate funds.

Eligibility Forms shall be made available to interested firms on the date and place mentioned below upon payment of a non-refundable amount of one thousand pesos (P1,000.00)

Schedule of Procurement Activities:

Activity	Dates	Time	Place
Issuance of Eligibility Statement Form	May 5, 2004	8AM to 5PM	PPMC Office, Pennsylvania Ave., San Fernando City, La Union
Deadline for Submission of Letter of Intent and Eligibility Statement Form	May 11, 2004	12:00 noon	PPMC Office, Pennsylvania Ave., San Fernando City, La Union
Issuance of TOR and other Bid Documents and Site Inspection	May 27, 2004	8AM to 5PM	PPMC Office, Pennsylvania Ave., San Fernando City, La Union
Pre-Bid Conference	May 31, 2004	2:00 PM	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union
Submission and Opening of Bids	June 14, 2004	9.00 AM	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union

Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria, subject to a short listing by PPMC. Thus, only eligible and subsequently short listed firms shall be invited to participate in the bidding. All Bids shall be evaluated under the quality-cost based evaluation/selection procedure as provided under RA 9184 and its IRR-A.

PPMC reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defect or required formality thereto and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal, as determined by the BAC, is the most advantageous to the Corporation.

Should you need any further information or clarification regarding the Consulting Services, you may contact Engr. Jose B. Karganilla at Telephone No. (072) 888-5954

(Sgd.) **ANTHONY C. MANGUIAT**
Chairman, BAC

(PDI-- April 20 & 27, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Iloilo
Municipality of Concepcion

Invitation to Apply For Eligibility and To Bid

ITB No. 2004-NCB-PM-001

Date: April 15, 2004

To: All Eligible Suppliers,

The Municipal Government of Concepcion, Iloilo and its implementing partners, DAR-ADB invites sealed offers/ quotations from eligible suppliers for furnishing the supply of various construction materials amounting to Six Million Six Hundred Fourteen Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Two Pesos (PhP 6,614,882.00) for the Concreting/ Rehab. of JNR Sitio Proper Agnaga-Sitio Belen Calamigan.

Offers or quotations shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after opening of quotations and must be accompanied by a bid security of two and one half (2-1/2%) percent of total quoted price, and shall be delivered to The Chairperson Pre/ Post-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee, Municipality of Concepcion, Province of Iloilo on or before **April 29, 2004** at 10:00 a.m.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids which may found disadvantageous to the government.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) **ENGR. EVA MAE V. PARREÑAS**
Chairperson
Bids Award Committee, Concepcion, Iloilo

(PDI-- April 20 & 27, 2004)

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NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE TO BUYERS OF ACCO HOMES In NHA PROJECTS

Buyers of house and or lots of ACCO Homes are hereby notified that the Memorandum of Agreement executed between A.C. Cruz Construction (ACCO Homes) and the National Housing Authority (NHA) on March 11, 1998 has been terminated under NHA Board Resolution No. 4672 dated 28 March 2003.

All buyers and other interested persons are advised that all pertinent transactions must be made with the National Housing Authority.

The National Housing Authority reserves the right to reject any or all transactions entered into by A.C. Cruz Construction (ACCO) on the matter.

Done this 12th day of April 2004 in Quezon City, Philippines.

(Sgd.) JOSEPH PETER S. SISON
Asst. General Manager and
Officer-In-Charge

(PDI – April 20, 2004)

In the picture is Isabelita Habito with Ricabelle Habito, a mother and daughter BayanTel subscriber in one of Max's Restaurant branch in Buendia near LRT station while paying their bill using Max's Restaurant Gift Certificate they received from BayanTel by simply calling long-distance.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY,
APRIL 20, 2004

OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
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Mortuary and Crematory opening soon!

Amado N. Lopez

of Naic, Cavite

Peacefully joined his Creator on April 17, 2004
at the age of 78.

His family **Aida** †, **Jaime** and **Marissa, Mian**

His brothers and sisters
Roberto and **Remedios** † **Angeles**
Saturno † and **Maria Ramirez**
Jose and **Milagros Lopez**
Justita Lopez
Epifania Lopez †
Matea Lopez
Gregorio † and **Rustica Moral**
Rosario Lopez †
Rosie Lopez †

Enjoin the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul. His remains lie in state at the mortuary of the Santuario de San José, East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

On April 20, 2004, he shall be transferred to the ancestral home in Naic, Cavite after the Holy Mass at 10:00 a.m.

Interment will be on April 22, 2004 at the Naic Catholic Cemetery after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at the Immaculate Concepcion Shrine in Naic, Cavite at 2:00 p.m.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, there's nothing I shall want." Psalm 23:1

PEDRO "Pedring" CARAM SAAD

March 27, 1921 – April 17, 2004

Wife **Helen Longa** (†), son **Peter Joseph "Bebeng"** daughter-in-law **May Reyes**; grandchildren **Pj** and **Janine**; brother **Jose "Pepito"** (†), sisters **Carmen, Lourdes** and **Juanita.**

His remains lie in state at Capilla de San Francisco Forbes Park, Makati.

Interment will be on Wednesday, April 21, 2004 at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque, after the 8 a.m. mass at the capilla.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 10:39

JUDGE SENEN O. CASIBANG

of Piat, Cagayan

Peacefully joined his Creator
on April 18, 2004 at the age of 69.

His loving & servile wife, **Amelia**; children, **Con-Con** and **Janeth, Algo** and **Adeth, Che-Che** and **Erwin**; grandchildren **Choi, Katrine, Paula, Erika** and **Anton**; brothers and sisters, request relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Del Pilar Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 24, 2004 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. mass at the Funeraria Paz Del Pilar Chapel.

Message of Thanks

Our thanks to all those who offered Masses, novenas and prayers; sent flowers and messages of sympathy; gave financial assistance/donations; kept vigil and attended the funeral rites; and who in countless ways condoled with, helped and comforted us in our moment of grief. Thank you.

From the family of

LETICIA DIZON FERNANDO

January 29, 1926 – March 20, 2004

Thank You

To our friends & relatives and the former associates of "Miss Jo", our sincerest thanks for your expression of sympathy during our time of sorrow.

From the family of
Josefa L. Maglaque
October 30, 1925 - April 12, 2004

ILDEFONSO (RUDY) E. BUNCALAN

Joined his Creator on Sunday, April 18, 2004
at the age of 68.

His bereaved children **Ron** (abroad) and **Rehza**, sisters, **Amparo** (Ampy) & husband **Nomer**, **Noemi** (Mimi) & husband **Luis** (abroad), **Helen** (abroad) and brother **Winifredo** Winnie (abroad), nieces, nephews and relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

The body lies in state at the St. Claire Funeral Homes, Pasig City. Interment will take place at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 21, 2004.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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OBITUARIES
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LAMBERTO DE RAMOS HIMOC

of Lumban, Laguna

Peacefully returned to the Lord
on April 18, 2004 at the age of 62.

Wake at Arlington - until April 20,
Lumban - April 21.
Interment at Lumban Memorial Park,
April 22, 2004

CLASSIFIEDS

NFA, DBP spearhead rice mill upgrading

A FINANCING program being jointly implemented by the NFA and the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), the RMSDP is designed to give impetus to private rice and corn millers to improve their milling facilities and processes and attain maximum operational efficiency.

NFA Administrator Arthur C. Yap said the program is targeting to benefit the country's rice mill operators who operate some 11,033 rice milling units in various areas nationwide.

Based on a survey made by the NFA, about 9,316 or 84.44 percent of these existing units are single pass rice mills that could be transformed into more efficient rice mills. Single pass rice mills are classified either as kiskisan or compact type wherein palay for milling passes at rubber roll just once to remove the hull.

Meanwhile, from a total of 1,717 multi-pass rice mills being operated in the country, only about 155 units have graders and could be technically categorized as capable of producing premium grade rice.

To transform inefficient rice mills into more efficient ones, Yap said technical and advisory services are being offered under the RMSDP to rice mill owners and operators. This is aside from the financial assistance being made available to them through the DBP's Sustainable Logistics Development Program. These financial packages are available through the bank's marketing units and its participating financial institutions.

A total of P6.5 B is being alloted to finance rice milling development of the NFA which falls under the grains highway category of the DBP's Sustainable Logistics Program.

Yap said a total of 31 projects for milling facility improvement and upgrading have already been approved and given fund appropriations by the DBP. These projects include the establishment of new rice milling centers as well as the upgrading and improvement of existing ones.

Nine other project proposals under the ricemilling and trading categories are presently being evaluated as to their viability and feasibility, he added.

With the savings generated from reduced post harvest losses and high milling recovery on the part of the rice mill owners, the country is in a better position to realize sufficiency in rice, Yap cited.

Aside from providing consumers with quality rice, the RMSDP prepares the local rice milling industry for globalization.

The program will also boost NFA's implementation of the Philippine Grains Standardization program under which rice mills are categorized according to their capability to produce premium rice, Yap said.

The public may text their reactions and/or suggestions to the story by sending them to cell phone number 0917-6210927.

NFA investigates rice diversion

NATIONAL Food Authority administrator Arthur C. Yap has directed the agency's Directorate for Enforcement and Investigation to immediately investigate reported cases of diversion of government rice in Metro Manila.

Yap made the move in view of reports that NFA rice are allegedly being diverted by some unscrupulous grains retailers in the area.

"We are serious in this campaign. Those found guilty will be dealt with accordingly", he stressed.

The NFA has remained vigilant in keeping track of the rice market situation, specifically on the aspect of the selling of rice stocks allocated to its accredited outlets. However, inspite of these monitoring activities, there had been recent reports of the occurrence of some illegal rice trading practices. These include stock diversion and overpricing.

NFA rice is being sold to its accredited outlets at P16 per kilogram. These outlets include the Bigasan ni Gloria sa Palengke (BGP), Tindahan ni Gloria sa Barangay (TGB) and accredited rice retailers.

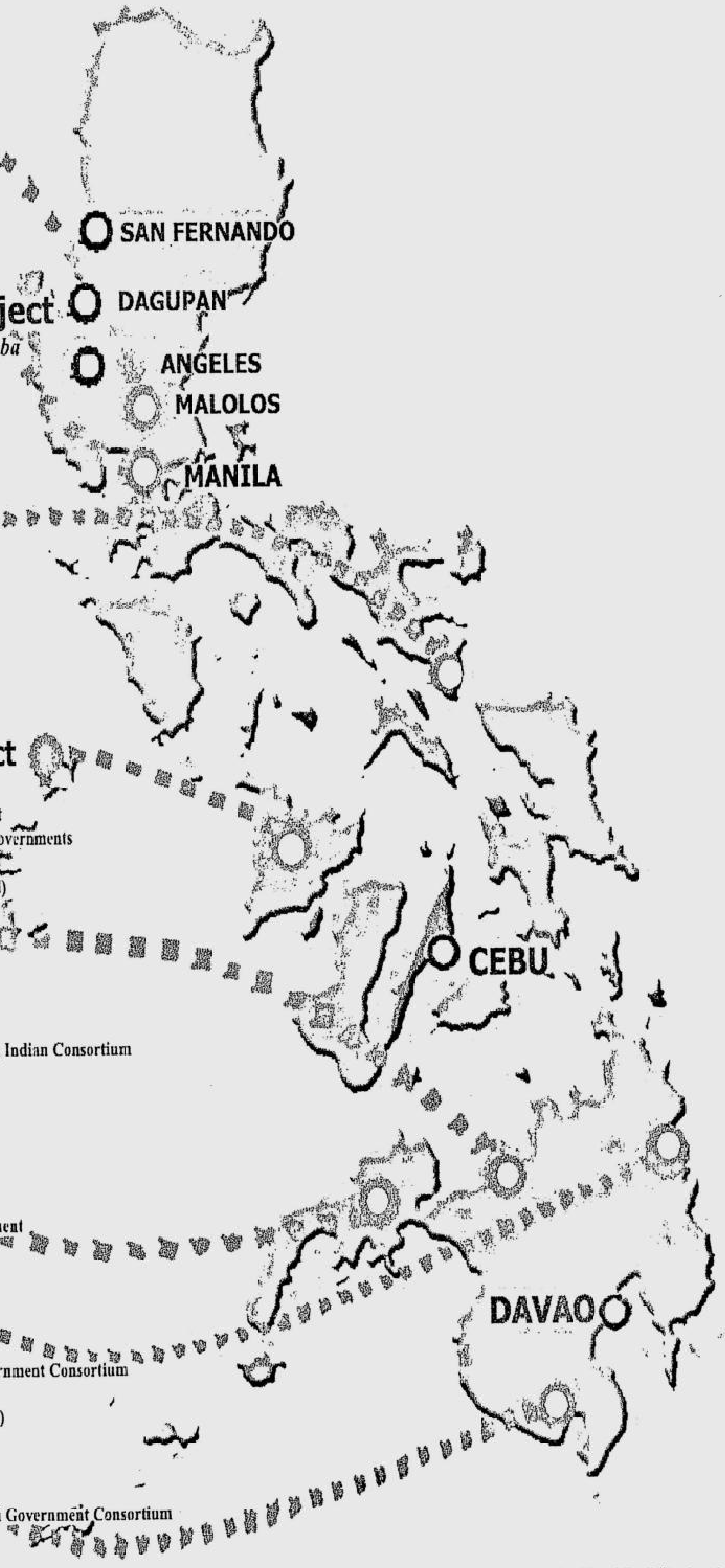
Other outlets for pro-poor programs such as Targeted Rice Distribution Program (TRDP) and the Coconut Farmers Food Access program (CFFAP) sell NFA rice at P14 per kilogram. These outlets are usually situated in highly populated and depressed areas across the archipelago.

The public is encouraged to send-in their comments, suggestions, queries and complaints on cases of rice diversion and overpricing to the agency through mobile number 0917-6210927.

For the first time in Philippine history, after decades of neglect, a modern railway system will now be built, under Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's leadership, almost simultaneously, in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao to serve our people, move cargo, link and fuse economies and societies, create new human settlements, to help unite the nation.

SRTransit

STRONG REPUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM



NorthRail Project

Caloocan to Malolos

(Stage 1, Phase 1 of the railroad to the Ilocos Region)
Owner: North Luzon Railways Corporation
Funding: Export-Import Bank of China, Chinese Government
Contractor: China National Machinery and Equipment Corporation owned by the Chinese Government
(Manila, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Pangasinan, La Union)

South Manila Commuter Rail Project

Phase 1: Caloocan to Alabang; Phase 2: Alabang to Calamba

(Phase 2 to be followed by a rail line to the Port of Batangas City)
Owner : Philippine National Railways
Funding: Economic Development Cooperation Fund of Korea & Korea Export-Import Bank, Korean Government
Proponent: Daewoo International Corporation

PNR Main Line South

Calamba to Legaspi to Matnog, Sorsogon

Owner : Philippine National Railways
Proponent: China National Technical Import and Export Corporation, owned by the Chinese Government
Funding: Chinese Government
(Calamba, Laguna to Quezon, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon)
(Feasibility Study completed at no cost to Philippine Government)

Panay Railways Rehabilitation Project

Iloilo City to Roxas City

Owner : Panay Railways Corporation, owned by the Philippine Government
Funding: Official Development Assistance, German, French and Austrian Governments
Proponent: SYSTRA, SIEMENS & VOEST ALPINE Consortium (representing three among the largest rail developers in the world)
(Iloilo City to Roxas City, Capiz and eventually to Aklan and Antique)

Mindanao Railways Project

Iligan City to Cagayan de Oro City up to Phividec Port Zone

Owner : Philippine National Railways
Proponent: IRCON International Limited, jointly with German, Austrian, Indian Consortium
Funding: Thai, German, & Indian Governments
(Feasibility study completed at no cost to Philippine government)

Iligan City to Zamboanga City

Owner : Philippine National Railways
Proponent: IRCON International Limited
Funding: Indian Government Consortium, subsidiary of Indian Government
(Feasibility Study completed at no cost to Philippine Government)

Cagayan de Oro City to Agusan to Surigao

Owner : Philippine National Railways
Proponent: TEWET SYSTRA & SIEMENS
Joint-Venture with the Indian, Thai, French, German and Austrian Government Consortium
Funding: German Government
(Feasibility study being prepared at no cost to the Philippine Government)

Surigao to Davao City to General Santos City

Owner : Philippine National Railways
Proponent: German-Siemens Consortium with the Austrian, Thai, Indian Government Consortium
(Feasibility study being undertaken at no cost to Philippine government)

(Next Program: Manila - Bulacan - Nueva Ecija - Nueva Vizcaya - Isabela - Cagayan - Ilocos Norte - Ilocos Sur Line to link up and connect with the NorthRail Project.)

(Paid Advt.)

REALESTATE

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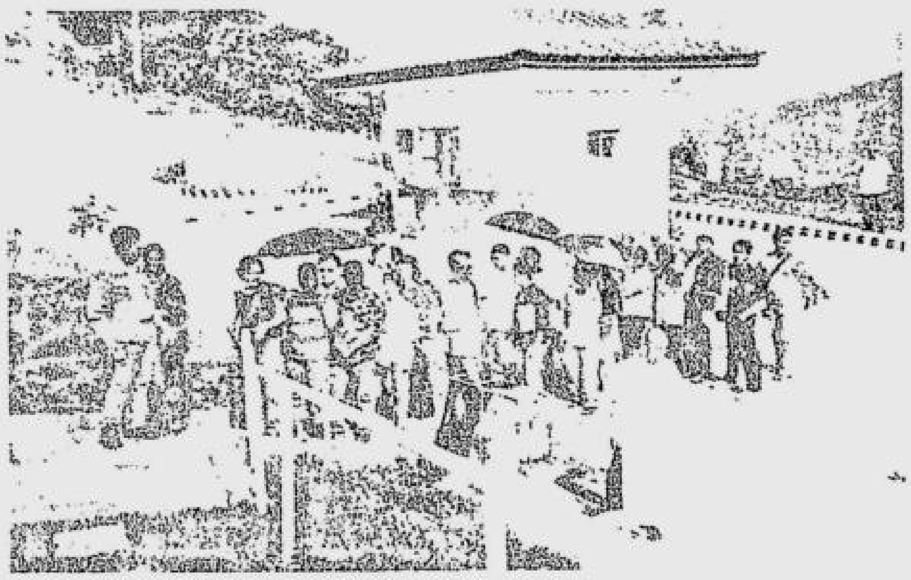
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

DENR stops full-scale dev't of Buhai housing project

By Jerry Esplanada



WOULD-BE homeowners visit the Buhai project site, which DENR geologists say is "sitting on unstable ground."

Buhai's old ECC covers only 9.9 hectares, not the entire project, says DENR

BUHAI GARDEN
HOMES

ENTRANCE to the Buhai mass housing project

THE BUHAI mass housing project of the Bulacan provincial government and the real estate firm Alto Projekt Asia is in one big fix.

Development of the 163-hectare Buhai property cannot proceed, at least for now, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Why? Because more than five years after the Buhai contract signing on March 7, 1999, the ambitious project has yet to secure an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) covering the entire area, the Central Luzon office of DENR's Environmental Management Bureau has disclosed.

The ECC issued to Buhai Garden Homes in March 1999 "covered only 9.9 hectares of the housing project," not the entire project site, EMB regional director Lormelyn Claudio told the INQUIRER.

Failure to submit

More bad news from Claudio: Buhai's application for an amended ECC, filed on Dec. 29, 2000 and that would supposedly cover 60 hectares, has been cancelled by EMB because "project proponents failed to submit the required additional information."

The requirements included an Engineering, Geological and Geohazard Assessment Report (or Eggar) on the site, one that is duly approved by DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

Buhai proponents also have yet to submit the following: Overall Master Development Plan; updated Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan; Watershed Management Plan; detailed description of the project's impact areas; final site development plan; resolution from the host municipality; and clarification on the actual project location.

Claudio noted "any expansion of (ECC coverage) shall be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment."

Safety concerns

Bulacan Gov. Josefina de la Cruz did not talk about her pet project's ECC problem when interviewed by this reporter.

Buhai, which De la Cruz described as "another Tagaytay Highlands," faces possible suspension, if not cancellation, of its ECC due to safety concerns raised by a DENR task force that recently checked out the site.

Perched on a remote hill chain between Norzagaray and Doña Remedios Trinidad towns, the controversial Buhai turned out to be sitting on "unstable ground," among other unfavorable findings of the team which included MGB geologists.

Relocation site

Short for Bulacan Housing and Agro-Industrial Inc., it is the planned relocation site for some 10,000 families, mostly squatters, who will be displaced by the government's $503-million North Rail Transit project.

The North Luzon Railways Development Corp., which is under the supervision of the Bases Conversion Development Authority, had donated the project site.

De la Cruz's critics had charged that she made a fortune from the sale of the property, brokered by no less than a provincial board member identified with the reelectionist governor.

She denied the charge, but acknowledged the board member's participation in the land sale when interviewed by this reporter.

Not the perfect choice

The governor, who touts Buhai as an example of visionary thinking, earlier furnished this paper a copy of the project's "geotechnical investigation report" purportedly prepared by a consultant firm called BIPGMTE.

The four-page report neither said the site was safe nor unsafe, but it indicated the Norzagaray-DRT hill chain was not the perfect choice for a mass housing project.

If the site is found unsafe for a mass housing project, the EMB regional office in San Fernando City, Pampanga, has "no alternative but to cancel its existing ECC."

"We're just awaiting the MGB report," said EMB-Region III executive assistant Shirley Ramos.

Close monitoring

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Elisea Gozun had called for a close monitoring of Buhai, described by Norzagaray Mayor Feliciano Legaspi as a "potential Cherry Hills" and an "accident waiting to happen."

At least 59 people were killed while 379 houses were destroyed during the Aug. 3, 1999 disaster at Cherry Hills subdivision in Antipolo.

Buhai had earlier failed to secure a permit from the Norzagaray municipal government, also due to alleged safety reasons.

Reminisced Legaspi: "First, they constructed an 8.67-km access road (from the outskirts of Poblacion to the project site), portions of which have either cracked or caved in. When they failed to get a permit from us they declared the site as part of the neighboring town of Doña Remedios Trinidad (or DRT)."

Buhai is inaccessible from DRT, but the governor had promised to put up a bridge linking the town with Buhai.

Delayed relocation

Last February, the relocation of the first batch of Buhai homeowners did not push through as announced by the governor.

Alto Projekt Asia president Dominador Tupaz Jr. put the blame on, among other reasons, the "delayed installation of electrical supply at the site," where less than 100 housing units have been put up so far.

Tupaz said the much-delayed relocation would definitely take place sometime this month.

The first phase of Northrail, which involves the construction of a 32.2-km rail track that will run from Caloocan City to Malolos City, is expected to be completed in two to three years.

The EMB had earlier asked Buhai proponents to temporarily stop land development pending compliance with the project's "paper requirements." But work at the site resumed early this year.

Both De la Cruz and Tupaz assured this paper the project site was safe.

Potential risks

DENR geologists, however, confirmed last week what some Norzagaray folk have been saying all along: Buhai is sitting on "unstable ground," making its site not safe, if not ideal for a mass housing project.

MGB regional director Arnulfo Cabantog said "what used to be solid rocks (at the project site's foundation) are no longer solid."

Citing initial findings of the DENR task force, Cabantog and chief geologist Orlando Pineda both said rocks there had "become highly fractured, highly weathered and highly altered."

The DENR team had also identified "potential risks in some portions of the area should the project be pursued," Claudio said, referring to portions of Buhai that were "steep, mountainous and more than 18 degrees in slope."

4% growth will continue to benefit property sector

DESPITE the uncertainties of the political exercise come May and the absence of statistics to support last year's growth of 4 percent, property developer One Asia Development Corp. is optimistic that this growth rate will be maintained this year and will continue to benefit the property sector.

One Asia president Victor H. Manarang said the slowing down of the manufacturing sector is somewhat being balanced off by the robust performance of the services sector, which is being further propped up by election spending.

For one, the low-cost and middle-range market housing sector will continue to grow at 3 to 4 percent overall with its increasing access to home financing. Socialized housing also has enough room for bigger growth this year because funds are being made available for such projects, he said.

Recovering

The high-end sector has, for the last two years, shown signs of recovering from the doldrums of the late '90s, which saw a huge inventory of high-end projects that the market could not absorb.

Manarang said that for the past two years, "the market has slowly but surely been absorbing whatever excess supply of high-rise projects and high-end condominium units were left from 1996 onward and new projects are now being started by developers like us."

He said there is always room for developers to realize growth in their operations this year by going to the "underserved" areas.

Newest project

Organized in July 2000, One Asia is the developer of The Celebrity Place, a P1-billion townhouse and walk-up condominium project in Diliman, Quezon City. It just launched last week its newest project called Verdant Heights in Parañaque City.

Verdant Heights covers a 3.38 hectares land property owned by Atlanta Land Corp. within the Multinational Village in Parañaque City. The P300-million development is being spearheaded by One Asia as project developer, while International Exchange Bank (Ibank) serves as the financial adviser and lender.

It is a well-planned residential enclave boasting of stylish and functional single-detached and single-attached house and lots and townhouse clusters in a beautifully landscaped and well-secured environment.

There are a total of 216 units for sale, of which 138 are townhouses; 65 single-attached and 13 single-detached houses and lots.

Affiliated outfits

One Asia's sister outfit Earth+Style Corp. caters to middle to high-end projects in Laguna and Cavite.

Three other outfits affiliated with One Asia are undertaking the socialized and low-cost housing development namely: 18-year-old Extraordinary Development Corp.; Acer Homes Development (the only developer in Montalban covering an underserved area) and Tahanang Yaman (which began development last year in Gen. Trias, Cavite).

Manarang said 70 to 80 percent of government funding for housing project goes to socialized and low-cost housing developments while 20 to 30 percent is for middle housing projects.

He said regardless of who will take over the administration after the May elections, the real concern for developers is whether or not the next president will give as much, if not greater, importance and resources to housing development.

Investing in a new development

By Alexis A. Acacio

BUILDING DREAMS

LAND that is available for housing inside Metro Manila is getting scarce. Houses are continuously being constructed and the remaining land available for housing gets less and less. Large tracts of land that can be developed for housing are now usually found in Laguna, Cavite, Antipolo and the farther areas.

Most of these are located outside of the metropolis and large-scale development within Metro Manila is mostly condominiums in densely populated areas due to the prohibitive cost of land. New developments offer advantages but there are also disadvantages that one should be aware of.

Advantages

The advantages of investing in a new development include:

- **Modern Facilities**—New communities are made according to the latest design trends and construction methods to attract new homebuyers. These are generally more energy efficient and well planned. For example, most of the houses that were built 20 years ago used wooden frames for its truss and roof system. Today, almost all houses use steel for the roof framing material since it is more durable and last longer than wood.
- **New Infrastructure**—New developments usually have new infrastructures such as new road networks attached to these. New subdivisions also have new clubhouses, pools, basketball courts and recreational facilities that are sometimes not found in older development.
- **Well Planned**—These new communities are planned with future infrastructure in mind. As you might observe, development of communities are done in various phases to match the current infrastructure with the population of the area. There are also many subdivisions developed decades ago that are very well planned and are still are today.
- **More Affordable**—New development generally costs lower than other areas that have been in the market for some years.
- **Appreciation**—Property buyers in new developments usually have the greatest benefit in terms of appreciation in value. Since they buy at the start of development in which land prices are at its lowest, investors gain substantially when they sell after a few years.

The list of advantages of buying in new developments does not mean that old developments have these. The list above can also be found in some old developments.

Disadvantages

- **Far from Established Infrastructure**—Initially, a new development may be far from established infrastructure. This means that you may have to travel farther to go to malls, churches, hospitals, etc. There are quite a few developments though that have more than adequate access roads taking into consideration the growth of the area.

Since these new communities are far from the metropolis, this may imply that travel time to and from work would also take longer.

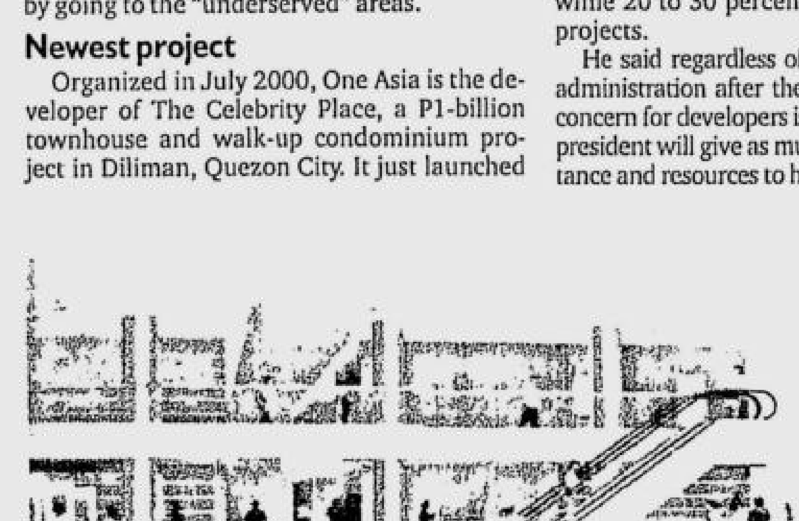
- **Construction of Support Infrastructures May Take Time**—For a community to fully develop, other support infrastructure should eventually be built. These various infrastructures include malls, churches, public markets, hospitals and schools. If you buy in a new development, these support infrastructures may be slow in coming. Always check the future plans of the developer or the local government unit regarding the facilities and infrastructure to be constructed in the area.

Final Note. Remember that the prime subdivisions of today were the "new developments" three or four decades ago. There is always an advantage of buying in a new development especially if the support infrastructures are in place. Remember though that each property is different and its rate of value appreciation is affected by many factors. Be always prudent in selecting your real estate investment.

Every property appreciates with time. The only difference is that some pieces of property appreciate faster than others.

E-mail the author at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.

Recto designs new 20-story DLSU bldg.



ENTRANCE lobby of DLSU's latest building has a modern touch using steel, stone and glass contrasted by warm wood veneer. It has a pair of escalators.

DE LA Salle University-Manila recently held groundbreaking ceremonies for its latest expansion project—a 20-story school building located on a 1,700 square meter lot on Taft Avenue, Manila.

Designed by multiawarded architect Philip H. Recto, the building will house the General Education Department and the Asia-Pacific Center for Teachers Education and Development (Acted).

Recto considered the school's desire to preserve the existing neoclassical architecture of DLSU campus as well as to have a modern-looking structure in his design.

The resulting architectural style he adopted is a modern interpretation of neoclassical design. It retains the beautiful form and proportion of classical architecture but is executed in modern lines and using modern materials such as high-reflective glass curtain walls and high-tech equipment.

According to Recto, the predominantly vertical lines in the green and white façade signify the pursuit of lofty aspirations while bright colors in the interiors portray youthfulness, vibrancy and dynamism. The total design exudes an aura of simplicity, beauty and modernity.

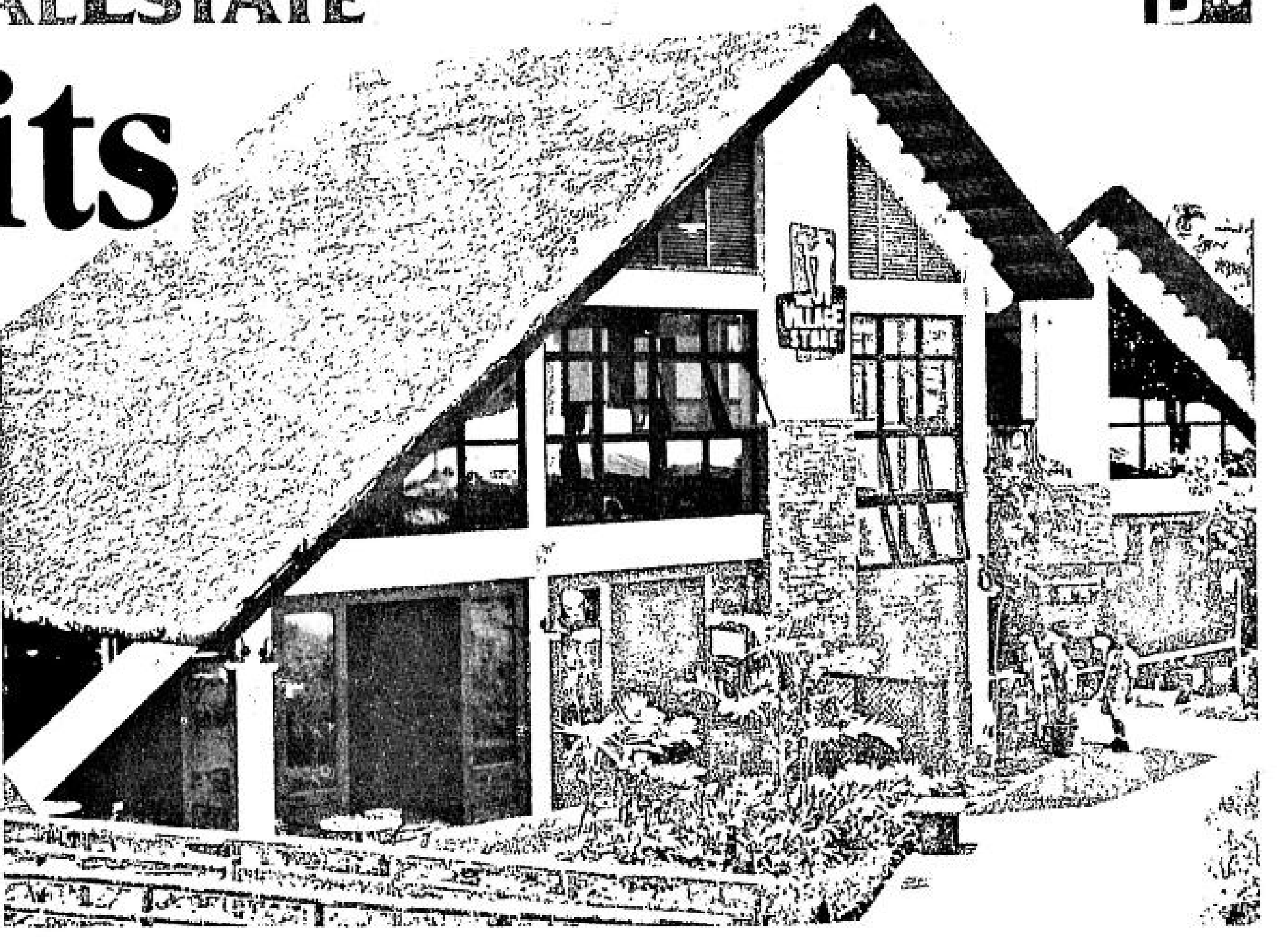
Recto has over 25 years of experience in designing educational buildings. His recent St. Paul College of Pasig design won the prestigious 2002 UAP Design Awadr of Excellence. Recto is noted for creating spaces that are both functional and interesting and this is reflected in his latest school design for De La Salle.

With a total floor area of 28,000 square meters, the new DSLU building will have the admission office, the institutional testing and evaluation office and a community counseling center at the ground floor; a library with a cybernook at the second floor; parking for 120 cars on the third to the sixth floor; and classrooms and faculty rooms on the upper floors. A canteen is also located on the sixth floor.

RECTO/ B9

Reaping the fruits of your labor at Leisure Farms

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban



A ONE-STOP shop, the Village Store was built to complement the Demo Farms and the residents' farms.

LEISURE Farms has officially welcomed what will be a complementing infrastructure to the already existing Demo Farms within this 123.5-hectare development of Landco Pacific Corp. in Lemery, Batangas.

The Village Store is the latest addition to this ongoing development touted as "the country's first and leading agro-tourism village."

Inside the Village Store, residents and their guests can buy at the most affordable price freshly picked produce (fruits and vegetables), seeds and seedlings, agricultural implements, organic fertilizers, farming books and even Leisure Farms souvenir items.

Working both ways

The Village Store works both ways: supply residents with fresh produce or items for their farming needs, and serves as delivery point where they bring their produce so the store will sell them or supply to establishments where it has special arrangements.

"In effect, this will allow Leisure Farms' weekend farmers to profit from their crops," revealed Landco Pacific chief operating officer Francis Ceballos.

Apart from the Village Store and Demo Farms, Leisure Farms aims to provide amenities and services that will make weekend farming a new and refreshing experience.

Landco Pacific partnered with Buro-Buro Spring Farms, Harbest Agri-Business Inc., Netafim, Figaro Coffee Co. and Gil Carandang (for the Organic Integrated Model Farms) for this farm estate project.

"They are constantly looking for ways to improve their technology and eventually share these knowledge to our residents," said Ceballos.

No worry farming

With these support group, hobby farmers doesn't have to worry about the technical details and they can just enjoy the farm without getting their hands dirty.

At the same time, other family members can enjoy the Leisure Farms' other features such as a swimming pool, basketball court, campsite and a variety of nature trails.

Indeed, these farm estates aim to provide urban families with a means to get away for the weekend or holiday in the refreshing environment of the countryside.

APART from farm produce, the Village Store also carries seeds, fertilizers and other farming tools and equipment.

ENJOY the freshest farm produce at the most affordable price.

A SEMINAR ON HOW TO'S AND WHY'S OF
JOINT VENTURES FOR REAL ESTATE PROJECTS
May 4, 1:30-6PM, Max's Rest. Glorietta 2, Makati
Covers how to and why organize joint ventures and Syndications; organizational forms; developer's role; role of financial partners; packaging a JV proposal; important provisions in a joint venture agreement & examples; sharing schemes; what to watch out & frauds by developers, how to protect landowners & developers, etc.
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Keeping those darn rats away

METICULOUSLY maintained or not, any home makes a perfect target for pests like rodents or rats. More often than not, homeowners are clueless that rodents have infested their property until their handiwork gets noticed. It could be a gaping hole in the cabinet, bite marks on the favorite furniture and electrical wires, or the most conspicuous work of all—a crevice in the wall.

It pays to know that these uninvited house guests actually come in three types—the house mouse, roof rat and the Norway rat. They are night crawlers when their sense are sharper in search for food. Though not blessed with good vision, rodents are able to compensate this by having great sense of smell, touch and hearing.

The house mouse is probably the most visible around the home. Small as they are, they thrive around people, thus making any house a choice nest. Highly adaptable, the house mice are hardest to catch because they move fast and are difficult to find. They are considered a prolific breeder because they can survive at any habitat with little or no water at all.

The medium-sized roof rat prefers hollow areas in ceilings. They have the innate ability to go up electrical wirings, thus making them even more dangerous since a bite can result to a fire. Just as elusive, roof rats are most wary about traps and bait stations.

Found to be most aggressive of the three is the Norway rat. This large creature stays undergound, in drainage and sewers. It feeds on leftovers from trash.

Though most rodents move around in the dark and rarely seen throughout the day, it must be known that the damage they can do is not only confined in the home. Sometimes, the filth that comes with their existence can cause diseases that are just as fatal like plague, infectious jaundice, food poisoning, meningitis, rat bite fever and rabies.

Preventing rodent infestation

It is therefore important for homeowners to be more vigilant in preventing infestation of rodents. Learning about rodents should create an increased awareness and concern that traps and other forms of medication only provide temporary treatment but hardly keep them away for good. Still the best way to go is to seek assistance from pest control professionals like Pest-Away to do the job.

Through an integrated pest management scheme, Pest-Away uses advanced strategies to eliminate rodent infestation. Its pest management specialists are well trained to give sound judgment and provide ready assessment in dealing with the infestation. First they would identify the problem areas and the type of rodents that invaded the property. Second, they make use of such initial assessment to go about the elimination process.

After elimination, these specialists would educate homeowners about sanitation throughout the property to prevent reinfestation. Then, an exclusion process will be set in place wherein possible entry and exit points will be sealed. This should officially ratproof the property. To know more about Pest-Away and its valued services, call 861-3403 or visit www.pest-away.net.

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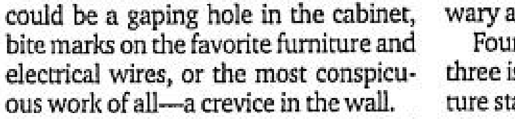

THE LATEST building of DLSU designed by Recto

Recto . . .

From page B8

The College of Education will occupy the 17th and 18th floors while the Acted, the 19th to 20th floor. The system offices, where the university president holds office, will occupy the topmost floor. There will be an auditorium on the 19th floor and a multipurpose hall on the topmost floor.

The project is expected for completion in June 2006.

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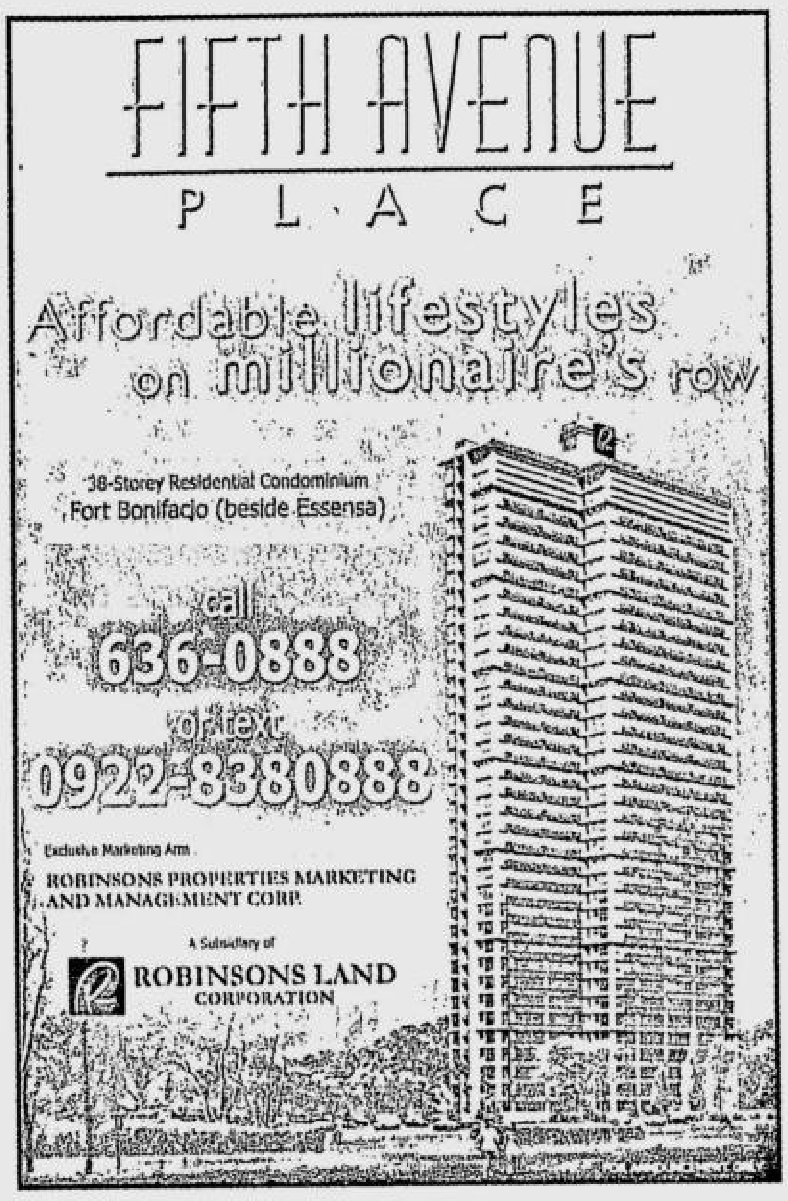
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Water utilities told to pay franchise, income taxes

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has ordered water utilities operating outside Metro Manila to settle their unpaid franchise tax and corporate income tax liabilities since 2001, when their tax exemption expired.

The BIR said it was now evaluating the tax compliance of local water districts. The move was undertaken following the BIR's discovery that several water districts had been delinquent in paying franchise and corporate income taxes due to confusion over an old law that granted them exemption from those taxes.

"We have issued an RMC (revenue memorandum circular) to tell water districts, which continue to refuse paying taxes, that they are now liable to franchise and income taxes," said BIR Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares in an interview.

Under the recently issued Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 63-2003, the BIR ordered local water districts nationwide to pay said taxes, as it clarified that the tax exemptions they previously enjoyed under Republic Act No. 7109 was already lifted in 2001.

This law, which took effect in 1996, provided local water districts a five-year exemption from these taxes.

Henares said the BIR could not yet give the specific amount of liabilities of local water districts nationwide, but added that the revenue agency was already in the process of coming up with the numbers.

"We are now assessing each of them, and we will go after those who will be found to have failed paying the taxes since 2001," Henares said.

The BIR said the move to evaluate the tax compliance of local water districts, some of which are government-owned or -controlled, was part of its program to intensify its auditing system to raise revenue collection.

HENARES

The BIR, which contributes over 80 percent of the government's revenue, is tasked to collect P477 billion this year, or 12 percent higher than its P425.3-billion collection last year.

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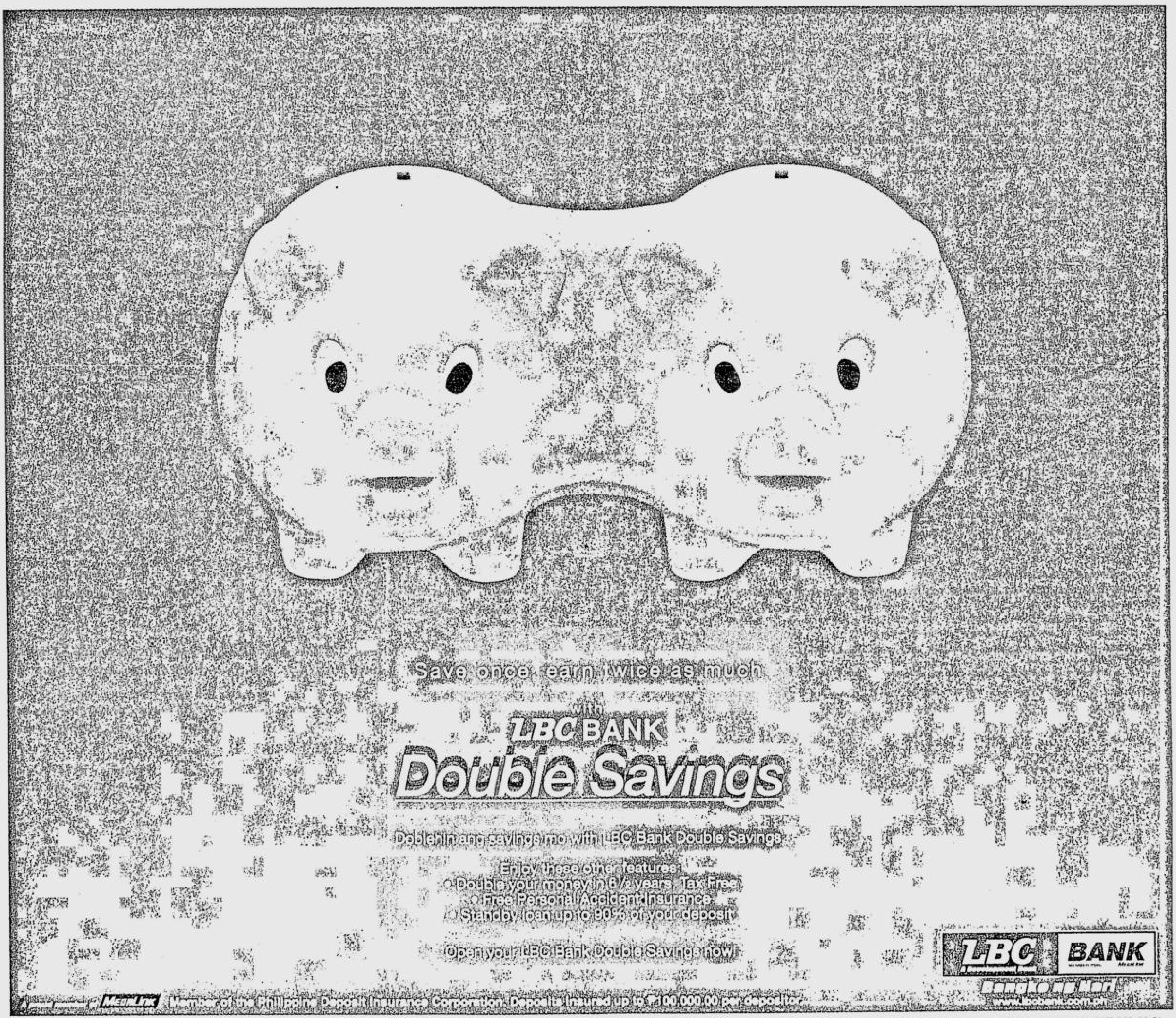
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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

A celebration
of a beautiful view /C2

MONDAY ARTS ● TUESDAY FITNESS ● WEDNESDAY 2BU ● THURSDAY FOOD ● FRIDAY HOME & FASHION ● SUNDAY SURPRISES

Get a beauty makeover from a good workout

The aftereffects of a physical fitness routine will help give you the look you want

By Vangie Baga-Reyes

FOR Nike, a workout does not only make a woman physically fit but also enhances her looks.

The company's newest ad campaign, simply called "After," aims to bring home the point that "makeover," "inner beauty" and "endorphins" are words associated with working out. Yes, Nike says if you want to look beautiful you have to get on your feet and get physical. The "after effects" of your workout—whether it is a 30-minute run on the treadmill, a few laps in the swimming pool, aerobics, badminton, Pilates or even yoga—will help give you the look you want.

According to Nike, exercise helps you feel a whole lot better because, as you work out, your body releases endorphins, chemicals that create a happy feeling in the brain.

More positive

So exercise does not only help reduce weight, but also raises self-esteem and diverts one's attention from negative to positive pursuits. You may not notice it, but Nike says you always exude a happy glow after a good workout.

"The inner beauty is enhanced when you experience the energy, the power, the exhilaration of your workout," says Colo Ventosa, mar-

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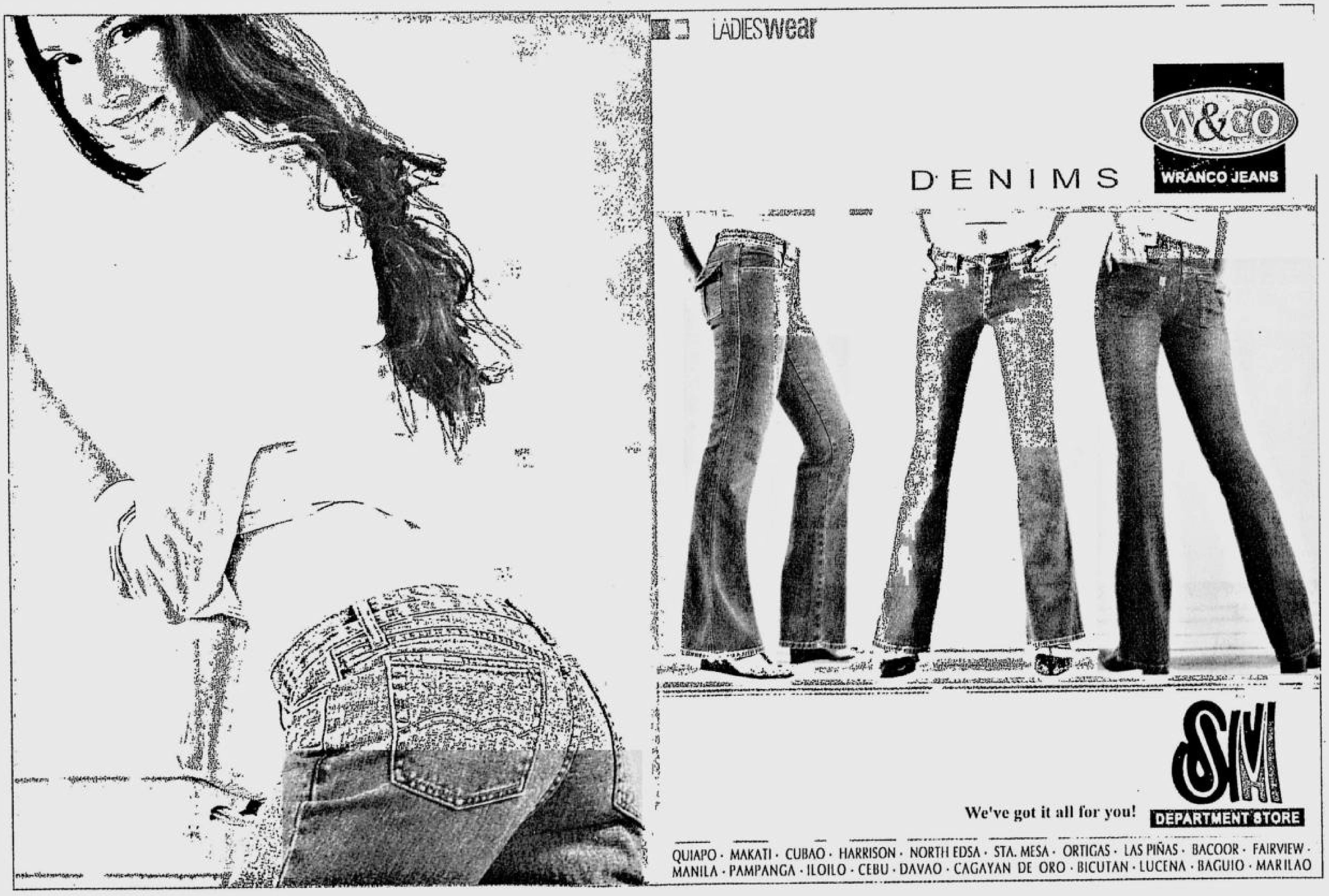

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MITCH Valdez had both Bellavista cocktail and Bellavista spumante!

EYE-CATCHING sisters-in-law Luli Delgado and Mindy Perez-Rubio

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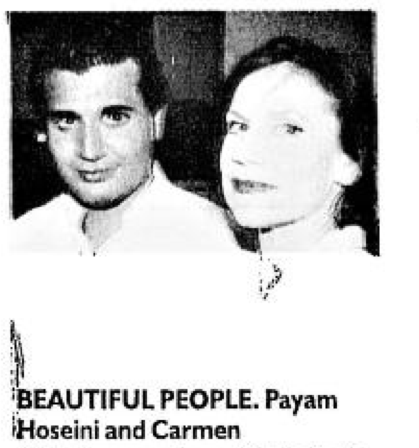
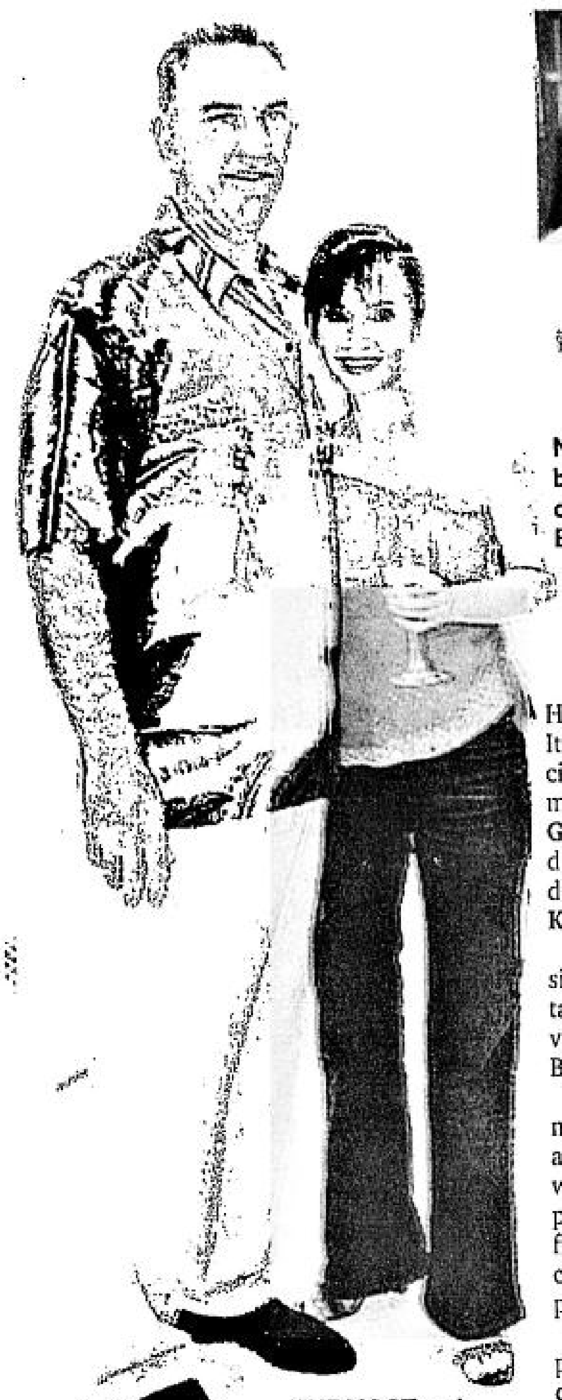


BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. Payam Hoseini and Carmen Mayerhousen, Josephine's best friend and Giorgio Armani's partner in Munich

A celebration of a beautiful view



THE HOST and hostess, Erv and Josephine Knox

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen on Kodak Max

HER favorite cocktail, "the popular Bellini" at Italy's world-renowned Harry's Bar, inspired civic-oriented, world traveler and one of Cosmo Manille's top hostesses, **Josephine del Gallego Knox**, to create a special welcome drink for a special bash she and hubby—tall, dashing international banker **Erv Knox**—hosted.

It was the housewarming of their new cliff side residence at the chi-chi Peninsula de Punta Fuego. They call it Bellavista, after their favorite Italian spumante, Bellavista Cuvée Brut, from the Franciacorta region.

The drink of the evening, the Bellavista, natch, consisted of the Bellavista spumante and fresh pineapple purée. Special *aperitivo* was dates from Abu Dhabi that Josephine prepared in two delicious combinations—with a filling of garganzala/feta cheese and pistachio mixture, and wrapped in arugula and prosciutto.

Her high school pal **Ed Mijares**; neighbor pals Joey and **Marissa**; **John** and **Peachy Concepcion** ; **O.V.** and **Marilen Espiritu and Bob Colombo**; **PL** and **Madeleine Lim** ; and **Vic** and **Boling Reyes**, who were house guests at Mar y Viento, the Espiritus' Punta Fuego villa, clearly enjoyed the original and tasty aperitif, even as they marveled at the house's eye-catching four sculptured white concrete portals.

Invitees also included **Tom** and **Julie Haidlen**, who came from California. **Payam Hoseini** and **Carmen Mayerhousen** jetted in from Germany.

The 100-plus chosen ones, wearing the colors of the sea and sun, congregated at the three different terraces enjoying Cibo's yummy hors d'oeuvres in the pre-sunset glow. Architect **Ed Calma**, a 2003 TOYM winner, proudly toured his father, **Lor Calma**; his uncle, **Pabling Calma**; and artist **Arturo Luz**, around the gorgeous, sprawling house.

French, Italian and New Zealand wines were drunk during the candlelit outdoor Italian dinner, *palanggas*, as music from the Da Capo quartet played. Enjoying the gastronomic experience were taipan **Wash Sycip**; BPI's first couple, **Xavier** and **Mert Loinaz**; pals **Mia Borromeo** and **Margarita Delgado**; **Mundy** and **Zita Feliciano**; popular couple Dr. **Mike** and **Backie Celdran**; Ambassador **Isabel Wilson**, together with Philippine Ambassador to Italy **Philippe Lhuillier** and his simpatica southern wife, **Edna**.

Inside, the chic Italian glass dining table offered scrumptious desserts to the delight of **Joseling** and **Fining Tambunting**, **Benny** and **Marilen Legarda**, **Tony** and **Beng Sison**, **Mike** and **Reggie Smith**, and **Alex** and **Gloria Campbell** as they sipped my favorite champagne, Veuve Clicquot, no less.

Erv Knox invited everyone to dance away the newly acquired "quality calories" to the swinging music of the hostess' favorite band, The Spirit of 67, which started with Kool and the Gang's "Celebration." Later, a spectacular fireworks display illuminated the evening sky to everyone's sheer delight!

Dancing at the terrace near the swimming pool were **Hoss Morasa**; **Manu Mantecon**; dynamic and dashing gentleman of the fabulous newly renovated Taal Vista Lodge in Tagaytay, **Alfredo Roca**; and Punta Fuego's **Ignacio Gandavarias**, with Mabolo's **Gemma Garcia**; **Jenny Burger**; **Raffy** and **Girl Villareal**; **Henry** and **Jojo Zabarte**; vivacious southern lady **Lucille Villanueva**; **Roman** and **Amalie Azanza**; the one-of-a-kind **Mitch Valdez**; **Ixi Mapua**; and Cinderella's fashionable **Therese Coronel Santos**.

Needless to say, *palanggas*, the dancing worked up an appetite, so beauties **Maripi Muscat**, **Ces Drilon**, **Beth Romualdez**, **Roi Philips** and **Ditas Laurel** dug into another Cibo specialty, *arroz caldo*.

Before guests left, they got a gorgeous Bellavista CD of 20 songs, including the Italian "Volare" and French "La Mer," performed by The Spirit especially for the occasion.

Some lucky souls who spent the night in Punta Fuego, not only had CDs to take home, but an orchid, a basket of dates and ponkan, Becky's Kitchen sweets, and an after-party feel-good package of L'Occitane Lavender Face Relaxing Masks, scented candles, incense sticks, shower gel and body lotion; Labello lip balm sticks from Germany; Dead Sea Mineral bath salts from Jordan; The Body Shop's Peppermint cooling foot spray and lemon-flavored Alka Seltzer.

Erv told *moi* the day after the bash, "I am looking forward to retiring in the Philippines, and it was great to mark the completion of our future full-time residence in Punta Fuego, and (to) share it with our community, the Dorothy Knox Reading Center (named after his mother), for the children of Balaytigue Elementary School, which my wife put up." Taipan Wash Sycip and TV's hotshot fashion plate Ces Drilon were guests of honor at the inauguration.

Josephine suggested to her husband to set up the center after meeting with **Lizzie Zobel**, vice president of the Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation.

It was definitely a celebration, with the classy Josephine Knox style that's hard to beat.

Touch of gold

How can anyone resist the allure of gold? I must say, *palanggas*, gold is back in the limelight, and one shining example is HSBC's hip new Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold that will definitely revolutionize the art of traveling and shopping.

With this new card, everything that is hot, from designer labels to whatever you fancy, is your ticket to a fab free trip abroad.

Imagine, dahlings, all you HSBC Mabuhay Miles Visa Gold cardholders, earning triple miles for every P45 you spend at Gucci and Prada outlets, SM Appliance Store, True Value, as well as Cosmo Manille's "in" dining places like Sugi, Aqua, Prince of Jaipur and all Shangri-La Hotels and restaurants. Now, *palanggas*, that's definitely hard to beat, *n'est-ce pas?*

During the Gold Visa launch, HSBC hotshots, led by Mr. Charmer himself, **Warner Manning**, and PAL's brilliant president, well-respected **Avelino Zapanta**, did not leave any stone unturned to make the event as lustrous as its namesake.

The "Gold Rush" was held at the elegantly transformed Lobby Lounge of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

The specially chosen cocktail finger foods were representative of the cuisine in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and PAL's newest fab destination, dazzling Las Vegas. The one-of-a-kind Hunter Valley Wines poured their award-winning spirits from Down Under like they were coming from the Maria Cristina Falls.

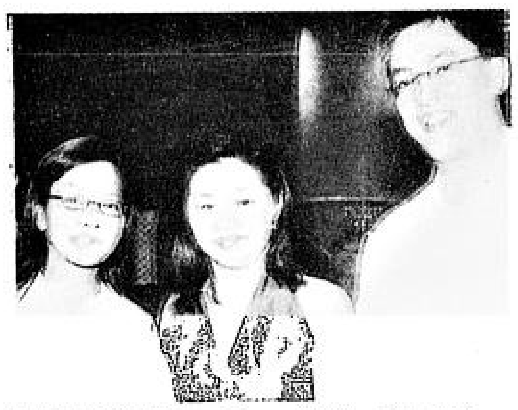
For now, I have to decide what to buy for my next free miles trip to "Hello, Las Vegas!" with my favorite pal, Philippine Airlines, natch, *palanggas*.

Oh yes, credit cards really have made buying so much easier, but paying—oh my!—is so much harder.

But I'll choose a credit card anytime, *palanggas*.

DANCING queens take a break: (seated) Nene Marquez, Becky Villegas, Christy Ojeda and Nita Claravall; (standing) Nancy Paguio, Lory-Vi Valdez, Goya Reinoso, Cora Relova, Mayette Merin, Munti del Rosario, Lorna Hizon and Letti Villar

SPIRIT'S dashing Johnny Velasquez with eyecatchers Nympha Yatco and Marissa Concepcion



THREE T'S: Celee Tang with Ann Tan and PAL's Michael Tan

FIRMA'S dynamic duo Ricky Toledo and Chito Vijandre with Ces Drilon in sunset colors

HOTSHOT society gals. Boling Reyes, Mert Loinaz, Victoria Preysler, and Madeleine Lim with businessman Vic Reyes

GOLF buddies: (seated) Marilen Espiritu, Josephine, Backie Celdran, Boling Reyes and PL Lim; (standing) Mundy Feliciano, OV Espiritu, Zita Feliciano, Vic Reyes, Joe Berie, Madeleine Lim, Erv and Mike Celdran

DITAS Laurel, Chito Recto, Erv and Dot Favis

THE SPECTACULAR 15-minute fireworks display during the bash

MOVERS and shakers. Rico Alfiler, Say Tetangco, Omar Cruz, Cesar Virtusio, Paqui Ortigas, Warner Manning and Melito Salazar

MEGA business magnates Edgardo Reyes, McDonalds kingpin George Yang, INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto, HSBC first lady Julie Manning and jeweller Kristine Yang

HSBC's Laine Santana

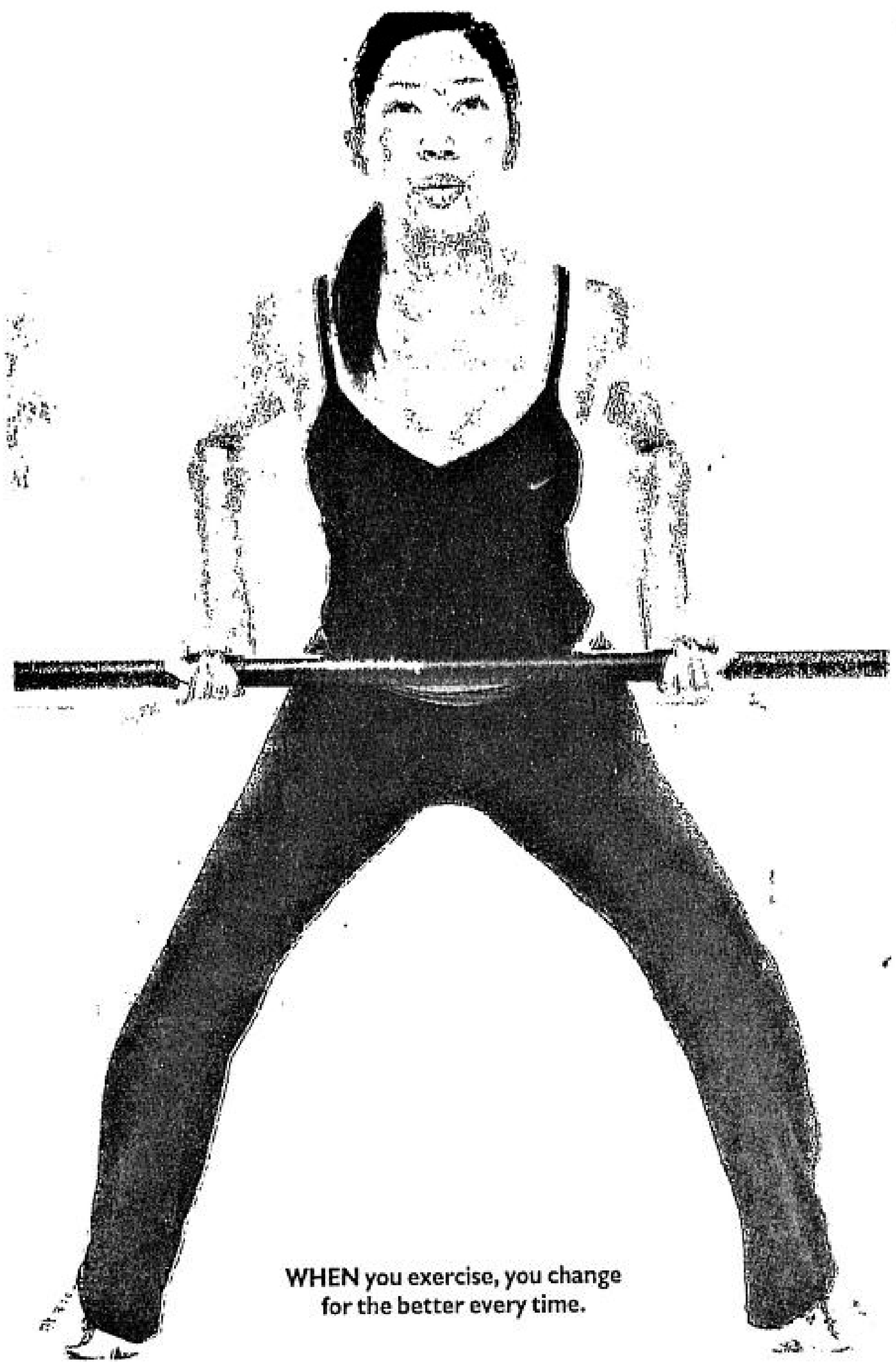
PAL's Ria Domingo

PEOPLE OF SUBSTANCE. Bulgari's Mario Katigbak, Print and Town's Dennis Valdes, and HSBC's cybersmart card division head Claire Yap

MEN of power. Eddie Carlos, PAL president Avelino Zapanta, HSBC CEO Warner Manning and PAL EVP Henry So-Uy

HUNTER Valley wine fans. HSBC deputy CEO Martin Cook, PAL executive VP Henry So-Uy, Lily Benoit, Max Talreja and HSBC's top marketing man James Benoit

Get a beauty makeover from a good workout



WHEN you exercise, you change for the better every time.

From page C1

keting manager of Nike Philippines, Inc.

The company is motivating women to tap into their inner beauty. Rather than think of working out simply as a means to achieve a thinner body or more defined muscle tone, Nike wants women to enjoy their fitness experience.

"Ask yourself how do you feel after the gym. Still anxious or confident, distressed or carefree?" Ventosa asks. She cites studies that show women who exercise regularly have more self-confidence and overall general happiness.

Everyday makeover

So, for Nike, no matter what the fitness activity is, working out is like an everyday makeover.

Nike encourages women to feel, not just see, the difference that results from a workout. Even just one session has been known to give a woman a sense of completeness and confidence. The discipline learned from sticking to a physical fitness routine can be applied to help improve other aspects of your life.

"In beauty makeovers you often have a complaint, like 'I need to look more sophisticated' or (you) want to project a more fun and flirty look. In the Nike makeover (resulting from fitness activities), focus is on the feeling because that's what shines through," Ventosa says. The feeling is what transforms you from blah to beautiful, she adds. In other words, beauty comes from within and is not dependent on cosmetics and other procedures.

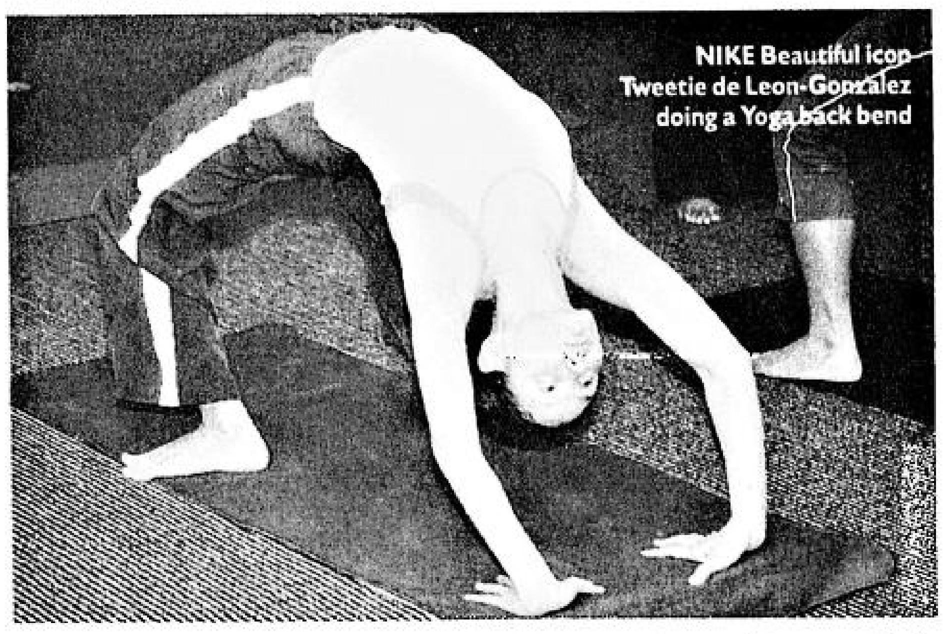
"Your fitness program, whether it's power yoga, Pilates, a spinning class or running, gives you a more strong and healthy body. After your workout, there's nothing you can't handle. The feeling you get is better than what comes from a new outfit or lipstick because it stems from you and has longer-term benefits. Don't look at working out as work. Think of it as an everyday makeover, stress relief, a time of enjoyment... in a fun, relaxing environment," she says.

For the right and stylish Nike get-up and fitness equipment, visit Nike Women stores: 2/F Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City and 3/L Robinsons Galleria Expansion Mall, Ortigas Center.

Visit www.nikewomen.com.ph.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

REEMA Chanco, Nike Beautiful icon, is determined to feel the energy, power and courage that Yoga brings.



NIKE Beautiful icon Tweetie de Leon-Gonzalez doing a Yoga back bend

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At the same time, it supports cardiovascular health and stabilizes bone metabolism, insulin and blood glucose metabolism, as well as immune function.

The use of the BioPhotonic Scanner and regular doses of LifePak to complement good nutrition and sufficient exercise can help achieve optimum health.

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'Cats' have fun in the sun

TWENTY-SEVEN catamarans participated in the 5th Philippine Hobie Challenge

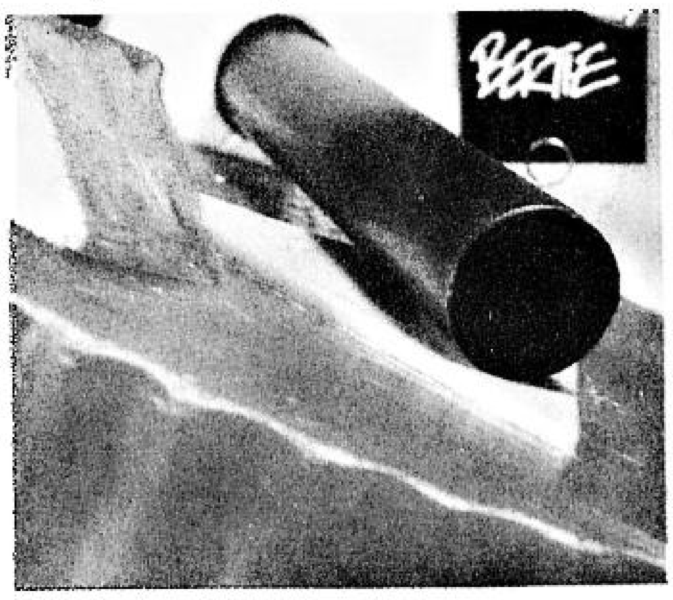
TWENTY-SEVEN participants from all over the world participated in the recent Nivea Inshore Races, the first leg of the Philippine Hobie Challenge, at Boracay's White Beach.

The Philippine Hobie Challenge featuring 16-foot Hobie catamarans is now on its fifth year. This year's challenge was spread out over a seven-day period on a 400-km stretch from Boracay to Busuanga, Palawan. The Nivea-sponsored event was the first of two races in Boracay. Five inter-island races brought competitors to northern Palawan.

The Team Australia of Aaron Worral, Andrew Keag and Sean Sibolo led in the Nivea event. Runners-up were Tong Shing and Evergreen Lee of Team Hong Kong. Tony Stearns and Janet McCullough of Team Saipan were third place.

The next legs brought the teams from Boracay to the islands of Sibay, Pamilacan, and Malcapuya, then to Illutuk Bay, and finally to Dimaquiat Island.

OOH La La Soap



BERTIE Soap

Herb garden in a soap

LUSH introduces two new soaps guaranteed to leave a lasting impression.

Ooh La La Soap (P245 for 100g) is a deep purple creation boasting of the beautiful and fragrant herb gardens of Provence. It will uplift the spirits and scent the bathroom all year round.

Topped with dried lavender sprigs and rose petals, the soap is suitable for skin that needs some extra tender loving care. There are also hints of rosemary and thyme, both stimulants and antidepressants. The purple color comes from organic red grape juice.

Bertie Soap (P245 for 100g) is a round, cerise-colored piece with geometric shapes in striking black and white and primrose yellow on the surface for a three-dimensional effect. It smells of detoxifying fennel; cleansing pine, which also helps improve concentration; tarragon, which supposedly banishes apathy and boredom; and licorice, said to ease exhaustion.

Lush, exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists, Inc., has boutiques at Glorietta 4, Power Plant Mall, Shangri-La Mall and Greenbelt 3. Visit www.lush.com.ph

Botox is here

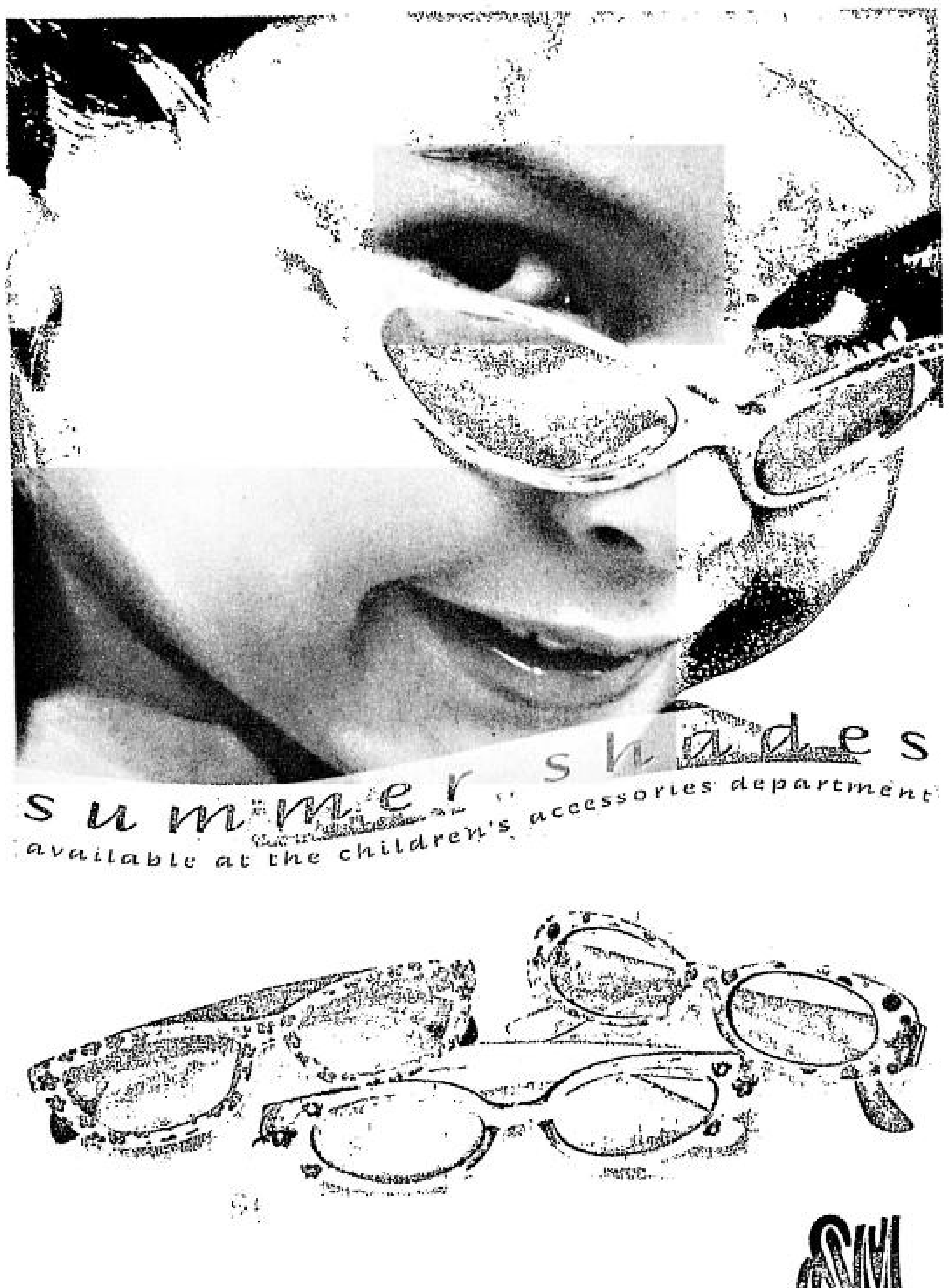
DERMCLINIC, through its owner/president, Dr. Vinson B. Pineda, introduced and pioneered in the Botox technology in the country several years ago.

Botox involves the injection of a low dose of botulinum toxin into a person's facial muscles to cause temporary relaxation of the affected parts. It can safely and effectively reduce facial lines, crow's feet and wrinkles, common signs of aging.

The procedure is becoming increasingly popular as it is non-invasive and involves practically no recovery time.

Some dermatologists have found that Botox can complement other treatments.

Dermclinic has 22 branches and a medical team of over 150 dermatologists, nurses and therapists nationwide. Call 8186477.



summer shades
available at the children's accessories department

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Davao hosts adventure race

LIGHTHOUSE Communications Company, together with the Department of Tourism, Island Garden City of Samal, Syogenta, Rudy Project and Exscape, is staging the first-ever adventure race in Davao City on April 23-25.

Top adventure racers from Manila, Cebu, Bacolod, Iligan, Cagayan and other parts of the country will participate in the event, the Aqua Terra Challenge 2004.

Team racers will compete in multisport challenges—mountain biking, trail running, swimming, banca paddling, push scooter, caving, skin diving and high angle disciplines, as well as mystery events.

Participants will need extensive land navigational skills for the extreme category, while basic orienteering and map reading skills are needed for the novice and juniors.

Visit the website at www.lighthouse.ph.

Prepare for the great outdoors

HAVE active fun this summer while looking good and staying fit.

A cup of Nestlé 0% Fat Yogurt daily can help you get the trim body you need for an adventurous season.

Here are some guides for making your outdoor trip more memorable:

Where to go. Decide what type of activity you are interested in so you will know where to go. You can go to the beach, visit a bird sanctuary or botanical garden, try spelunking, climb a mountain.

What to bring. Sunscreen protection, comfortable clothes, first-aid kit including medicines you take regularly, toiletries and other personal effects, insect repellant, food, flashlight with fresh batteries, and a camera, among others.

What to do before a trip. Walk briskly or jog for 30 minutes every day before going on an outdoor adventure. Work for a trim body but don't go on a crash diet.

Condition your body by eating Nestlé 0% Fat Yogurt, which is filled with live microorganisms to keep the digestive system in top shape. Fortified with Vitamin E, it will help improve blood circulation and tissue repair for healthy hair and skin this summer. The high amounts of calcium plus nutrients will help your body take on any summer challenge.

Nestlé 0% Fat Yogurt has bits of delectable fruit. It is available in strawberry and mango flavors in supermarkets.

Prevention can't be too soon

A CHILD must be brought to the dentist as soon as the first primary tooth appears, ideally, between six to 12 months of age.

The visit will teach parents the proper way to take care of the baby's teeth, prevent serious dental problems and familiarize the child with the dentist and his/her workplace. This will help the child become more relaxed during subsequent visits.

Parents should not wait until there is an emergency before bringing a child to a dentist. The treatment is often difficult and stressful making the child fear future visits to a dentist.

Dr. Marides David of Dra. Des' Kids Dental Clinic at SM Manila said children should develop good oral hygiene practices as soon as possible to minimize tooth decay and loss.

The clinic recommends a fluoride varnish treatment for infants and toddlers who easily develop tooth decay. Tooth sealant application is best for newly erupted teeth of a child between six to 12 years old. The sealant is a clear or opaque plastic that the dentist applies to chewing surfaces to "seal out" food and plaque, thus reducing tooth decay.

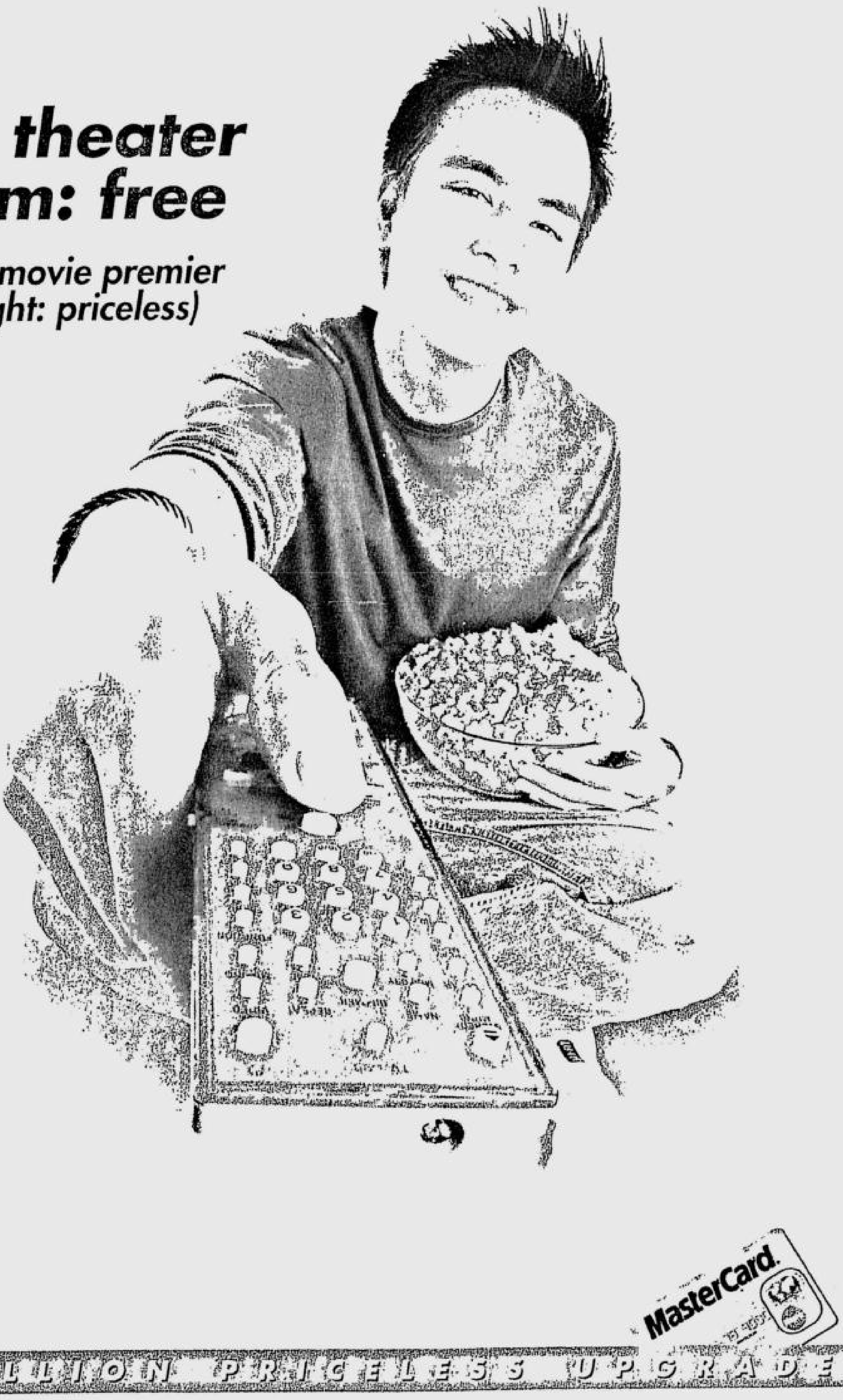
Dr. David also said the early loss of temporary teeth could cause poor alignment of permanent teeth and might require a child to wear braces.

Dra. Des' Kids Dental Clinic is at 5/L, SM Manila. It is open 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Monday-Sunday. Call 5213157.

DR. SHANE Martinez and Dr. Veron Sison perform a checkup on their young patient.

home theater system: free

(hosting a movie premier every night: priceless)



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Only P1,000 minimum purchase required! To join, simply call 689-1000, 914-1100, and 1-800-107-250-000 (for provincial calls toll-free). You will be guided to key in your 16-digit MasterCard card number, transaction amount, transaction date, and transaction time. Or you can email these required information to mastercard@ l isa.com.

Promo runs up to August 15, 2004 so use your MasterCard card now and prepare to experience one incredible, priceless upgrade.

MasterCard MasterCard Electronic

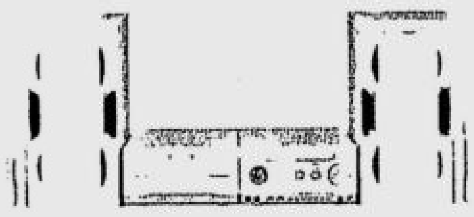
See flyers for details. Per DTI NCR Permit No.1730 series of 2004

1 MILLION GRAND PRIZE

Grand Draw Date: AUGUST 30, 2004

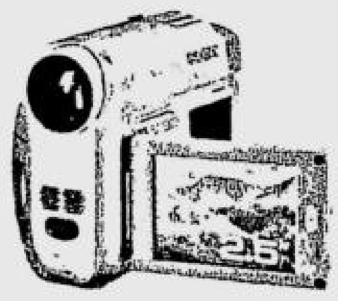
The Leisure Upgrade monthly draw

•Total of 22 winners•

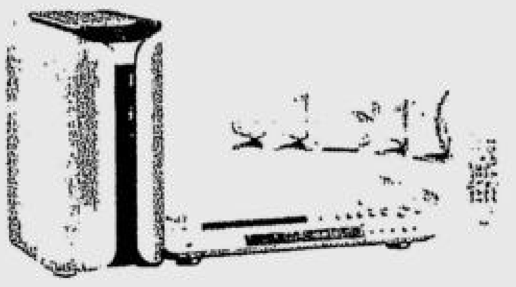


SONY MINI HI-FI
(6) winners

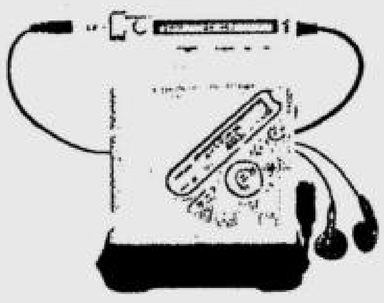
SONY PLAYSTATION 2
GAME PACKAGE (4) winners



SONY HANDYCAM (2) winners



SONY DVD HOME THEATER SYSTEM
(5) winners



SONY NET MD WALKMAN
w/ 8 mini disk (5) winners

*Photo may vary from actual unit.

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, text us at (0918) 382-4061 or (0916) 200-1160
or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

Dare to bare—those arms

Aerobic-type activities five to six times a week will trim jiggly upper limbs

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

SLEEVELESS dresses and blouses are perfect attire for hot days. But many women don't feel confident enough to bare their arms and shoulders. For some, it's because the arms are soft and flabby. Others hide their arms under long-sleeved blouses in spite of the heat because of excess fat.

Well, the good news is, compared to the lower body, a woman's upper body responds much faster to exercise in terms of muscle toning and fat loss. The buttocks, hips and thighs are more resistant because the fat stored there has hormonal and genetic "reasons."

For a woman with chubby arms, a commitment to an aerobic-type of activity five to six times a week for 30 to 60 minutes per session, plus a careful eye on what she eats, will slim and trim the arms.

It doesn't matter if the activity, like cycling or running, uses only the legs. Fat in the arms will still be reduced because it is burned from all over the body not just in the area being exercised.

Muscle-toning exercises will tighten the triceps, muscles at the back of the arms susceptible to jiggling. They will broaden your shoulders if they need broadening or just define them if that's all you need. They will also improve your posture by removing the round-shouldered look.

If you want bigger muscles in your arms and shoulders because you have very thin arms and sloping narrow shoulders, lift a weight that is heavy enough to make your muscles tired in 8 to 12 repetitions. Do one to three sets.

If you are satisfied with the size of your arms and shoulders but find them flabby and lacking in definition, lift a weight light enough to make your muscles tired in 15 to 20 repetitions. Do one to three sets.

Deltoids

The muscles of the shoulder are named for the Greek letter delta, which means triangle. The deltoids sit on the shoulder like a triangular shoulder pad—the anterior deltoid helps give shape to the chest and raises your arm forward, the middle deltoid gives the shoulders width and raises your arms sideways, and the posterior deltoid draws the shoulders and arms back.

Biceps

These are the muscles in the front upper part of your arm. Biceps means two-headed muscle. The biceps don't need much work to keep them strong and tight because we use them frequently in everyday activities like

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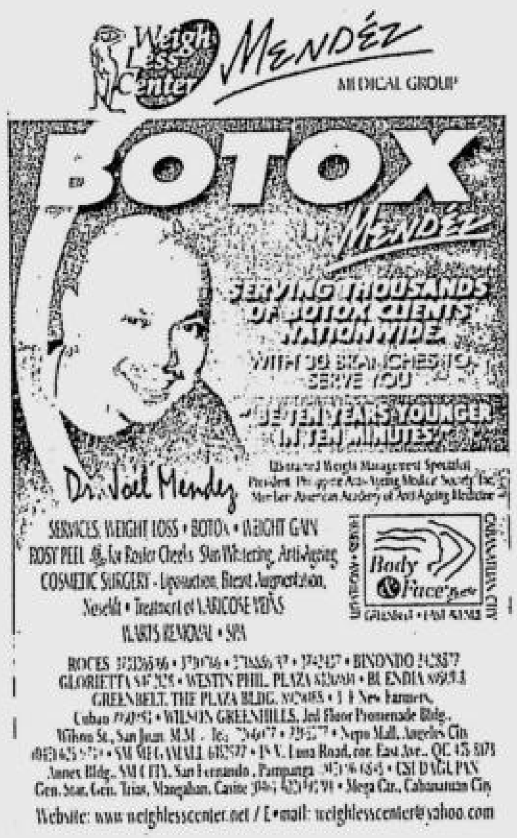

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"I am known to live life to the fullest, it's too short not to enjoy to the hilt, I try not to worry about trivial things, but I do take my health very seriously. I have tried just about every health fad, diet and food supplement, however the one product that I have stayed with for the past year is C-Lium © Fibre.

C-Lium © Fibre has really helped me and my family achieve digestive health. I believe that a healthy stomach is the secret to greater well being.

I also make it a point to take C-Lium © Fibre sachets with me on my travels, it helps by ensuring that I do not suffer from constipation problems which come with travelling. Surprisingly, it also helps control diarrhea.

Thanks to C-Lium © Fibre I have enjoyed a healthier life. I recommend it without reservation."

Carmita Francisco,
Multimedia Producer,
Businesswoman,
Travel Industry Leader
Health Practitioner

Beautiful outside, ...healthy inside.

C-Lium © Fibre is a natural fat absorber, it's a pre-need and multi tasking fiber which helps reduce the risk of heart disease, helps remove cholesterol, helps reduce weight, helps eliminate constipation, helps regulate the bowel movement, cleans the colon and intestine of wastes and toxins, helps control blood sugar and contributes to achieving well-being for the whole family.

The approved National Heart Foundation, American Heart Association and USFDA Statement of Product Claim reads" "Eating soluble fiber from foods such as Psyllium husk as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol together with regular exercise may reduce the risk of heart diseases"

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National Heart Foundation American Heart Association HALAL
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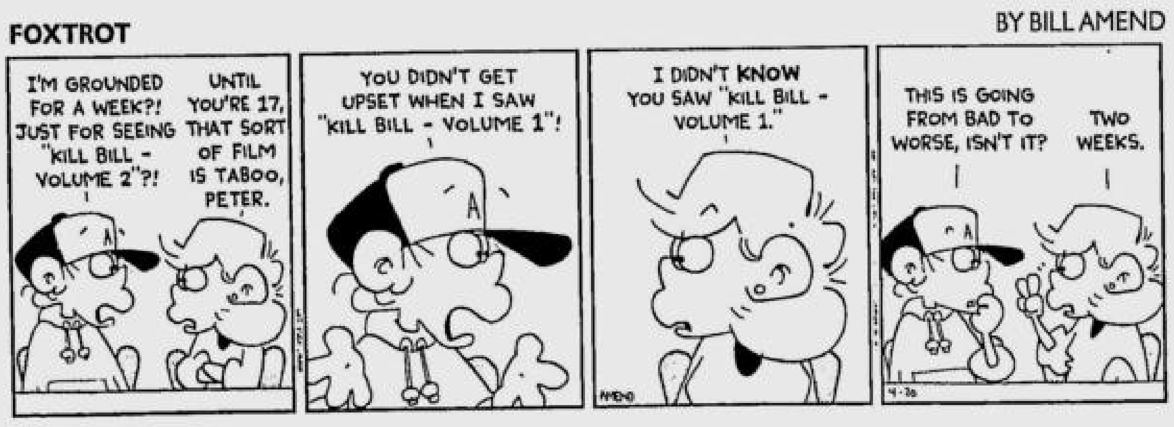
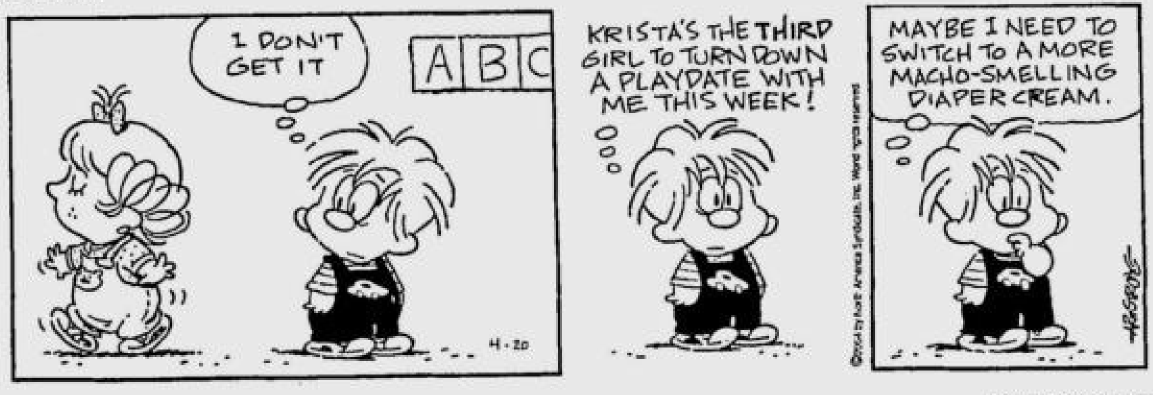
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I'M GROUNDED FOR A WEEK?! JUST FOR SEEING "KILL BILL - VOLUME 2"?!
UNTIL YOU'RE 17, THAT SORT OF FILM IS TABOO, PETER.
YOU DIDN'T GET UPSET WHEN I SAW "KILL BILL - VOLUME 1"!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU SAW "KILL BILL - VOLUME 1."
THIS IS GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE, ISN'T IT?
TWO WEEKS.
AMEND
4-20

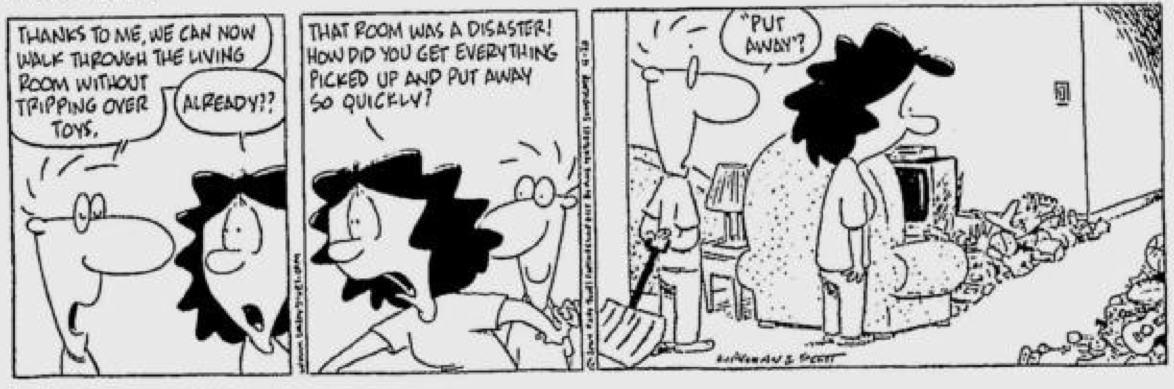
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I DON'T GET IT
A B C
4-20
KRISTA'S THE THIRD GIRL TO TURN DOWN A PLAYDATE WITH ME THIS WEEK!
MAYBE I NEED TO SWITCH TO A MORE MACHO-SMELLING DIAPER CREAM.
ARMSTRONG

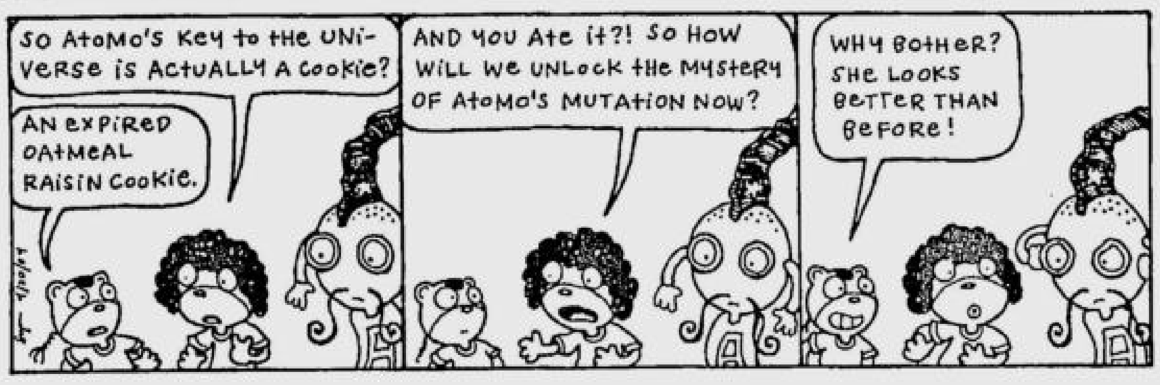
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THANKS TO ME, WE CAN NOW WALK THROUGH THE LIVING ROOM WITHOUT TRIPPING OVER TOYS.
ALREADY??
THAT ROOM WAS A DISASTER! HOW DID YOU GET EVERYTHING PICKED UP AND PUT AWAY SO QUICKLY?
"PUT AWAY"?
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO AtoMo's Key to the UNiverse is ActUALLY A Cookie?
AN expired OAtMeAL RAiSiN Cookie.
AND you Ate it?! So How Will We UNLock the Mystery OF AtoMo's MUTAtioN Now?
Why Bother? She Looks Better THAN Before!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are a strong, dynamic leader. (Sometimes you lead with enthusiasm; sometimes you lead very gently.) You always want to help others, especially your family and those who are less fortunate than you are. You're sensitive and private but personally exciting. You trust your gut instincts. People are inspired by you. Pay attention to important choices this year.
Birthdate of: Luther Vandross, singer; Carmen Electra, actress; Jessica Lange, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your focus now is on what you value in life. It's important to know this. Most of us don't really know what we want (sometimes until it's too late).

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is your time to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year. With the Sun in your sign for the next four weeks, you're energized, dynamic and more assertive than usual.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's important to get rest and quiet time to maintain your sanity. You have a naturally busy, curious mind. Give it a rest! Take a deep breath.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your popularity rating will increase in the next six weeks. People want to see you now. Be prepared to accept invitations. (You are loved.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Take extra care with your appearance now, because you'll be noticed more than usual in the next four weeks. Without any extra effort on your part, you impress people—especially VIPs!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Do anything that is out of your normal routine. What you need to do now is to expand your world in some way through study and travel.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't be surprised if you have intense reactions to others in the next few weeks. Your passionate nature is aroused! Take care of bills, debt and shared property as much as you can.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You can learn a lot about how you relate to others now. The Sun directly opposes you for the next four weeks, highlighting all your closest relationships.

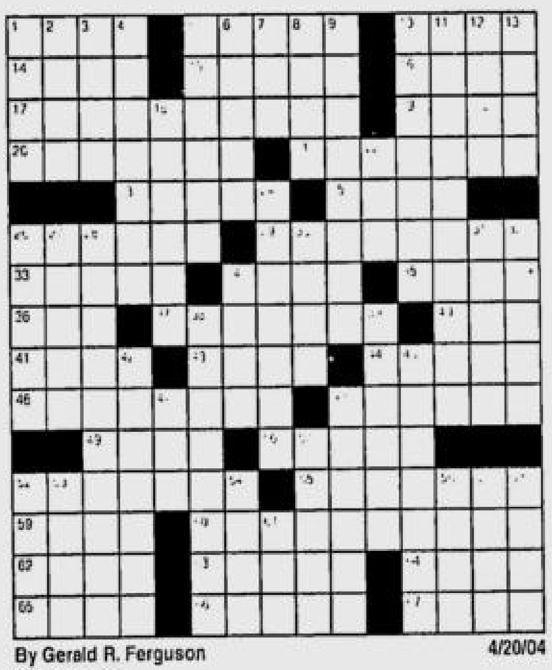
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Now is the time to get organized in every aspect of your life. Start by throwing away little things you don't use and don't need. Reduce your clutter!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Give yourself every opportunity to enjoy the arts and fun, social occasions. You feel like a child again. That's perfect—go out and play!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Many of you will be more involved with a parent in the month ahead. All domestic and family matters take priority now. Be patient and giving.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Without question, the tempo of your days begins to accelerate now. Increased reading, writing, appointments and conversations with everyone keep you on the go!

DAILY CROSSWORD

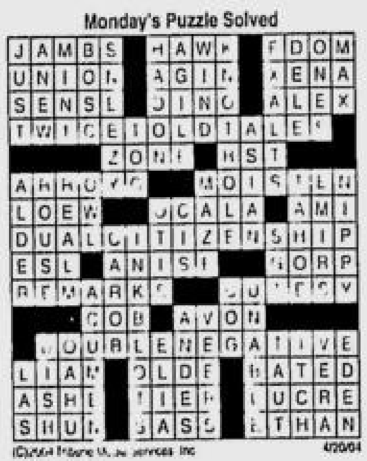


By Gerald R. Ferguson
Portland, OR
4/20/04

ACROSS
1 Work hard
5 Hidden store
10 Explorer Zebulon
14 __ Spumante
15 Arizona city
16 1st letter
17 Excessive talker
19 Feudal serf
20 Horse leaders
21 Some cats
23 Bowling alleys
25 Prod
26 "Gunsmoke" star
29 Like the darkest nights
33 Tractor maker
34 Cologne to Germans
35 Dotted cubes
36 Morning moisture
37 Somewhat stinky
40 Gun-owners' lobby
41 Caesar's existence
43 Witnessed
44 Impish
46 Wine server
48 Hits just out of the infield
49 British composer
50 Impassive
52 Title wrongly
55 Pawn shop patrons
59 O.T. book
60 Rumors
62 Bigfoot's shoe size
63 Fantasy genre
64 Links grp.
65 Gull's cousin
66 Jane Fonda film
67 Washington daily

DOWN
1 Speed-of-sound increment
2 Workplace watchdog grp.
3 Romance lang.
4 Smaller
5 Backs of boats
6 Concise
7 Emb. leader
8 Catch sight of
9 Six-sided figures
10 Patched
11 Tip from a jockey, e.g.
12 Cows
13 Somme summers
18 Affectionate critic
22 __ voyage!
24 Tobacco fans
26 Annexed
27 Actress Witherspoon
28 CNN employee
30 Ken or Lena
31 Temporary currency
32 Penn and Connery
34 Leg joint
38 Star-shaped figure
39 Spiral-shaped: pref
42 Made of baked clay
45 Puts behind bars
47 Compass dir.
48 Dance to rock music
51 Larceny
52 Fulfill
53 So that's it!
54 CLXV times X
56 Exxon, previously
57 Tractor-trailers
58 Squabble
61 NY school

Monday's Puzzle Solved



4/20/04

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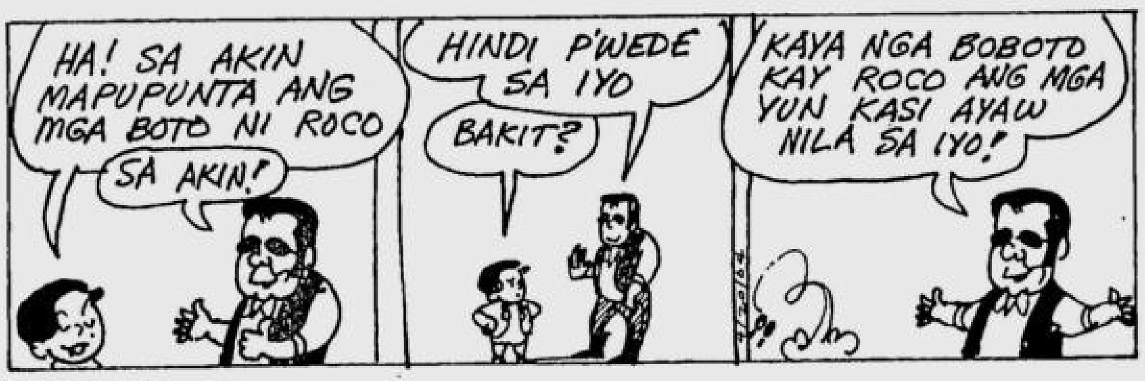
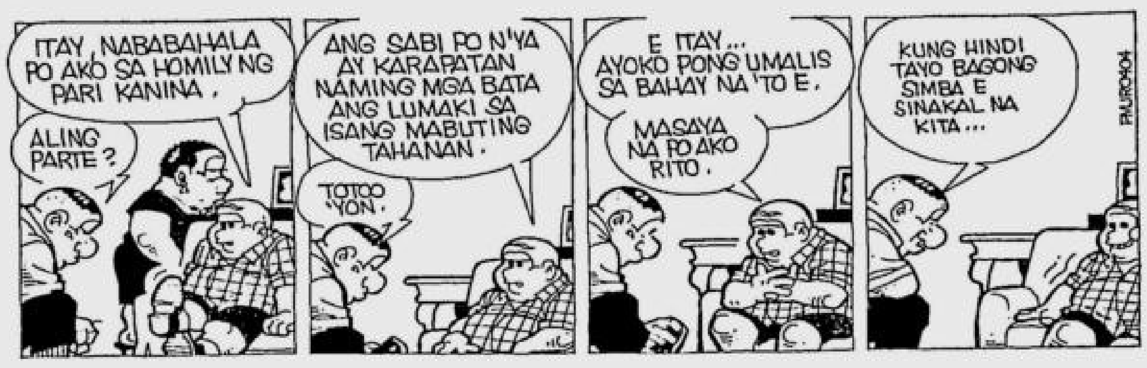
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HA! SA AKIN MAPUPUNTA ANG MGA BOTO NI ROCO
SA AKIN!
HINDI P'WEDE SA IYO
BAKIT?
KAYA NGA BOBOTO KAY ROCO ANG MGA YUN KASI AYAW NILA SA IYO!

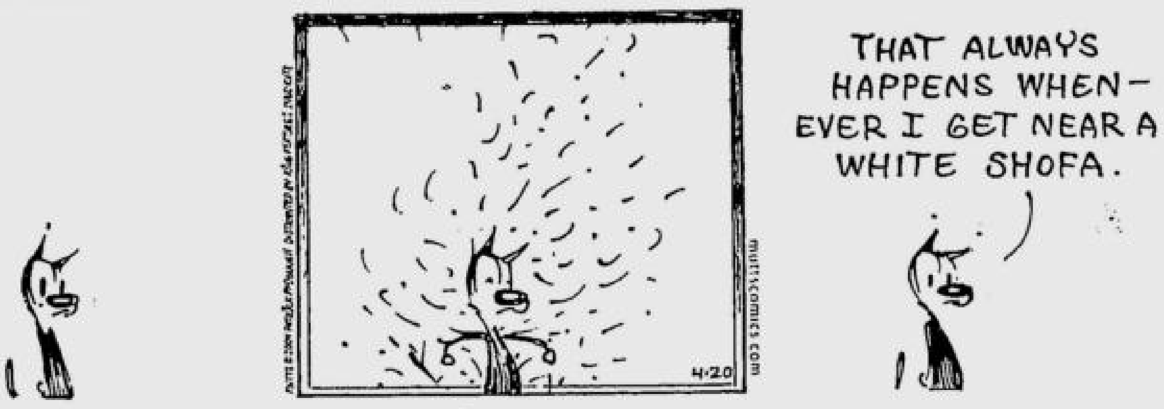
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ITAY, NABABAHALA PO AKO SA HOMILY NG PARI KANINA.
ALING PARTE?
ANG SABI PO N'YA AY KARAPATAN NAMING MGA BATA ANG LUMAKI SA ISANG MABUTING TAHANAN.
TOTOO 'YON.
E ITAY... AYOKO PONG UMALIS SA BAHAY NA 'TO E.
MASAYA NA PO AKO RITO.
KUNG HINDI TAYO BAGONG SIMBA E SINAKAL NA KITA...
PMJR.

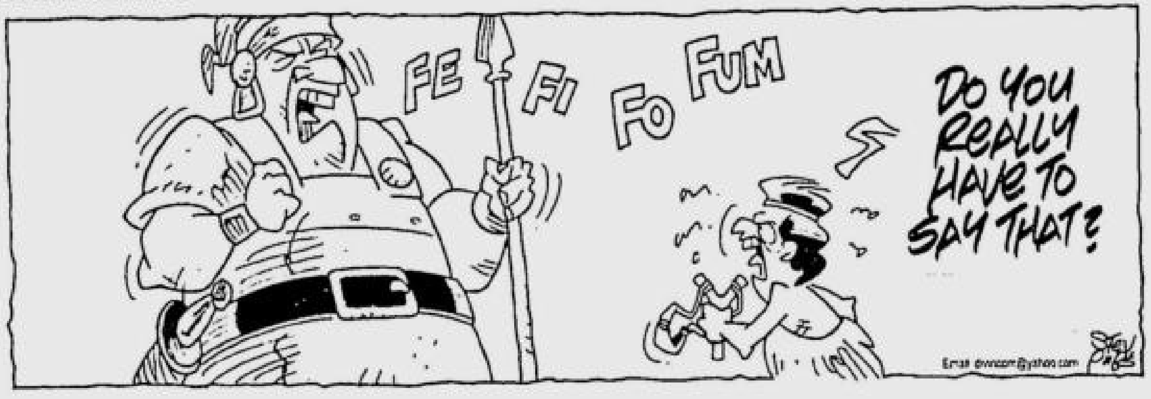
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


4-20
muttscomics.com
THAT ALWAYS HAPPENS WHENEVER I GET NEAR A WHITE SHOFA.

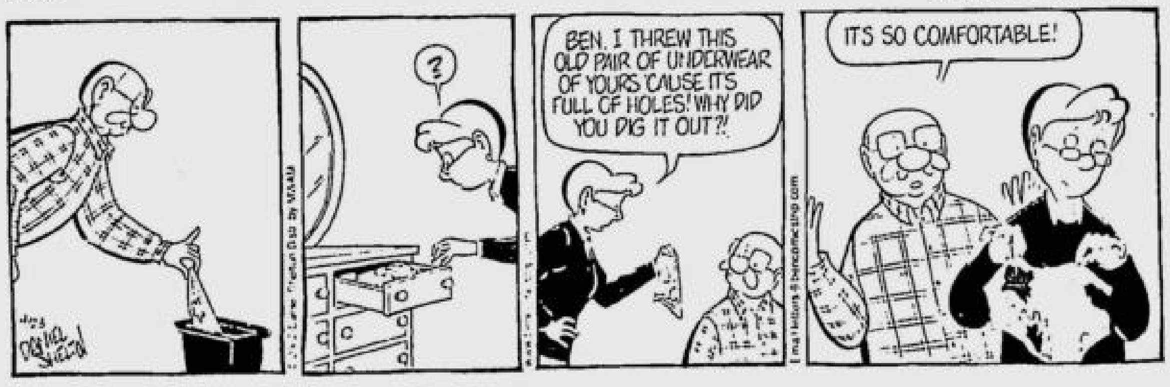
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


FE
FI
FO
FUM
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO SAY THAT?

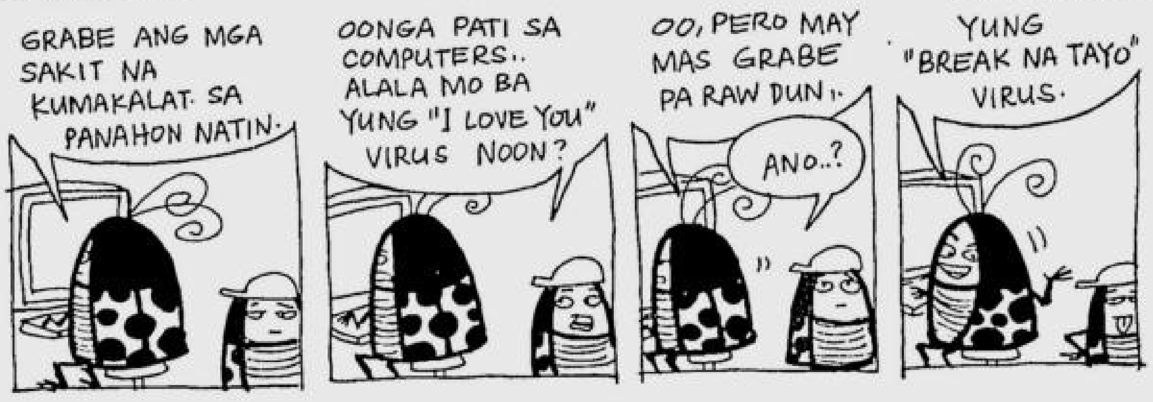
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


?
BEN, I THREW THIS OLD PAIR OF UNDERWEAR OF YOURS 'CAUSE ITS FULL OF HOLES! WHY DID YOU DIG IT OUT?!
ITS SO COMFORTABLE!
DANIEL SHELTON

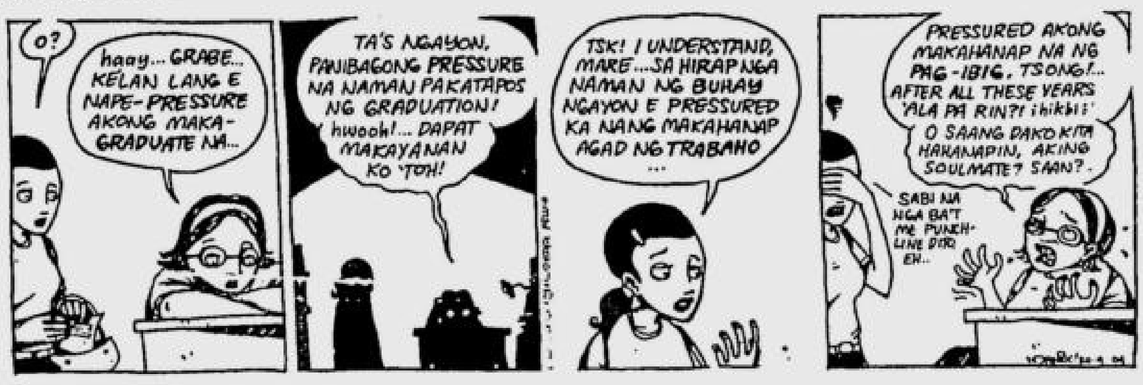
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GRABE ANG MGA SAKIT NA KUMAKALAT SA PANAHON NATIN.
OONGA PATI SA COMPUTERS.. ALALA MO BA YUNG "I LOVE YOU" VIRUS NOON?
OO, PERO MAY MAS GRABE PA RAW DUN..
ANO..?
YUNG "BREAK NA TAYO" VIRUS.

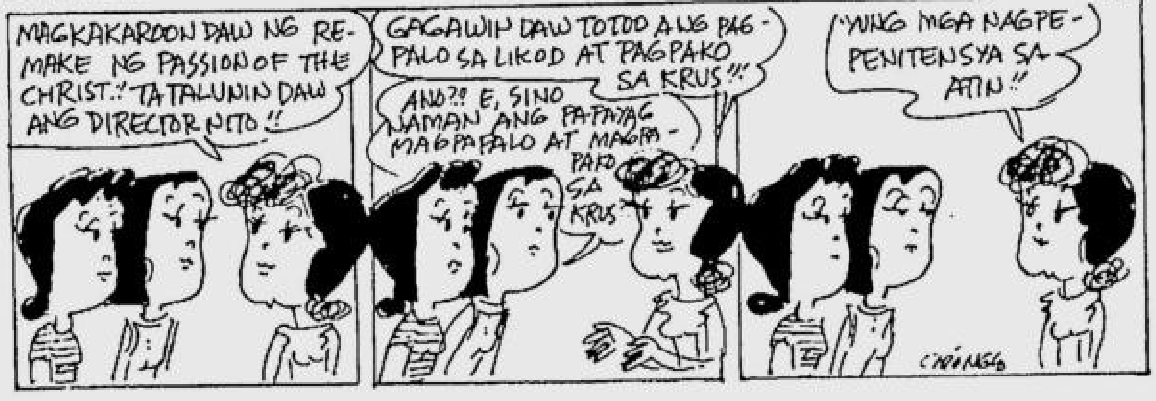
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


O?
haay... GRABE... KELAN LANG E NAPE-PRESSURE AKONG MAKA-GRADUATE NA...
TA'S NGAYON, PANIBAGONG PRESSURE NA NAMAN PAKATAPOS NG GRADUATION! hwooh!... DAPAT MAKAYANAN KO 'TOH!
TSK! I UNDERSTAND, MARE... SA HIRAP NGA NAMAN NG BUHAY NGAYON E PRESSURED KA NANG MAKAHANAP AGAD NG TRABAHO ...
PRESSURED AKONG MAKAHANAP NA NG PAG-IBIG, TSONG!... AFTER ALL THESE YEARS 'ALA PA RIN?! ihikhi!
O SAANG DAKO KITA HAHANAPIN, AKING SOULMATE? SAAN?
SABI NA NGA BA'T ME PUNCH-LINE DITO EH...

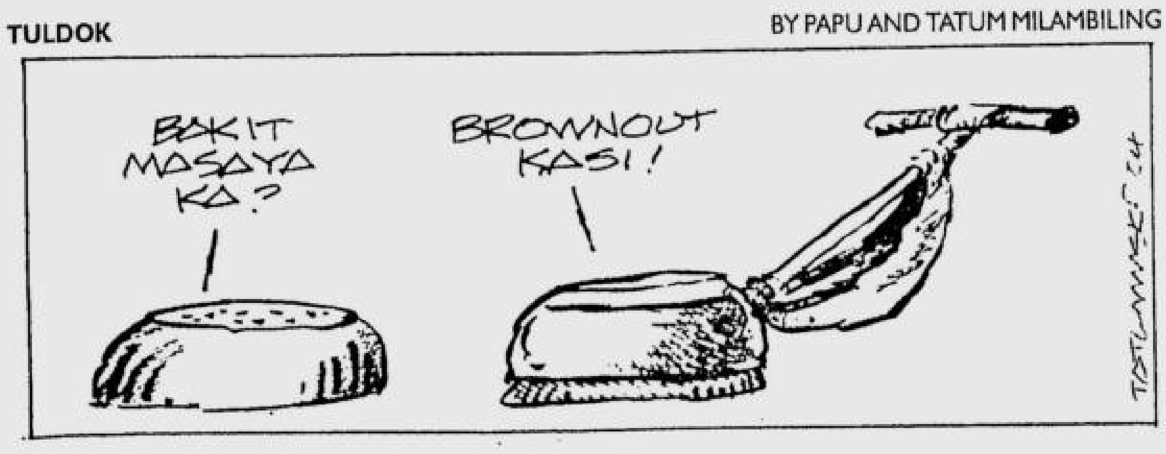
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MAGKAKAROON DAW NG REMAKE NG PASSION OF THE CHRIST!! TATALUNIN DAW ANG DIRECTOR NITO!!
GAGAWIN DAW TOTOO ANG PAG-PALO SA LIKOD AT PAGPAKO SA KRUS!!!
ANO?! E, SINO NAMAN ANG PAPAYAG MAGPAPALO AT MAGPA-PAKO SA KRUS?
'YUNG MGA NAGPE-PENITENSYA SA ATIN!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BAKIT MASAYA KA?
BROWNOUT KASI!

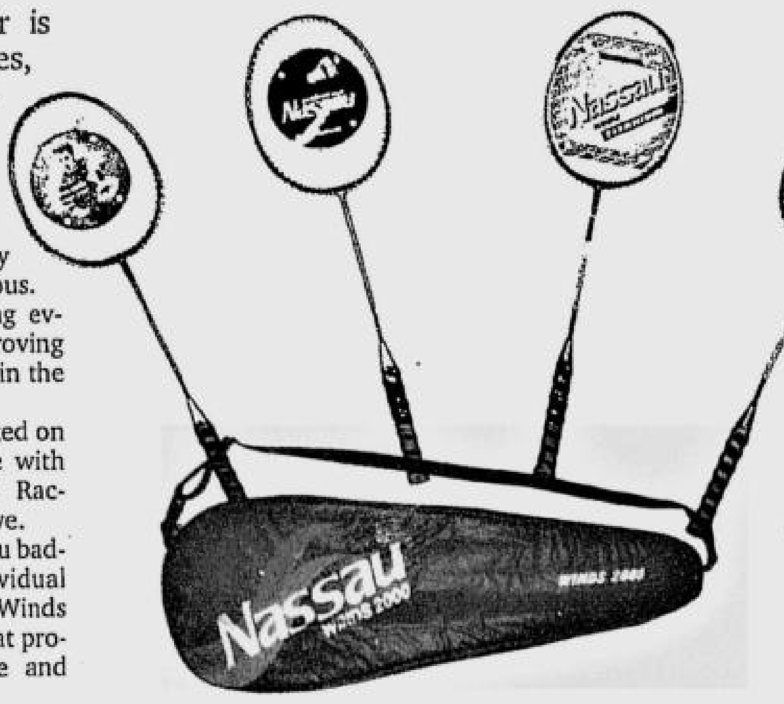
New alternatives to costly badminton racquets

THE BADMINTON fever is raging in the Philippines, with more and more people taking up a racquet and swinging away.

It is not just the favorite fitness regimen of many celebrities, but is also a favorite hobby of the young and health-conscious. Badminton centers are opening everywhere in Metro Manila, proving badminton is the hottest sport in the country.

If you are among those hooked on the sport, improve your game with the new Nassau Badminton Racquets—the affordable alternative.

There's a wide array of Nassau badminton racquets to suit individual needs of players, such as the Winds 2000, a lightweight weapon that provides minimum air resistance and maximum restitution.



NASSAU'S new racquets: Winds 2000, 5000, 7000 Titanium and 9000 Titanium

For the pro and avid player, the Winds 5000 model is the perfect choice, its aerodynamic shape working for maximum restitution and minimum air resistance to provide super power and speed. Both head and shaft are made of high modulus carbon graphite for lightweight maneuverability.

The Winds 7000 Titanium is a high technology product for the professional. Designed with a Titanium Mesh and High-Modulus Graphite fiber, it has a carbon graphite construction and titanium mesh shaft for power point. The wide body allows a wider, stiffer and more powerful frame.

The Winds 9000 Titanium is another option for the serious players. This carbon graphite-constructed racquet is fitted with a Titanium Mesh and a wide body for wider, stiffer and more powerful frame.

Nassau badminton racquets are exclusively distributed by Sports Resources, Inc. in the Philippines. They are available at Toby's Sports branches nationwide.

Interactive party for X-ers

OAKLEY showcases its stylish, high-performance products on April 24 at the Glorietta 4 Park, Ayala Center, Makati City.

Dubbed "Oakley X," the interactive show will allow guests to try on various products for golf, basketball, car racing, water sports and extreme sports like skateboarding and mountain biking.

Attending the event are Ali Peek, Lora Roberto, Paolo Araneta and show-biz personalities.

The show, which will start at noon, will present specially choreographed stunts featuring the hosts. A grand raffle is scheduled for 6 p.m.. It will be followed by performances of the DRT Band and Kevin Roy of Razorback. DJ Manolet Dario will provide a steady supply of pumping beats.

Oakley wallets, apparel, eyepieces, timepieces, footwear and other products are available at Rustan's Makati, Alabang Town Center and Shangri-La Plaza; G-force at The Podium and The Power Plant Mall; T102 in Greenbelt 3, Royal Sporting House and Olympic Village.

Dare to bare—those arms

From page D1

picking up a bag of groceries and pulling open a door or drawer.

Triceps

Triceps means three-headed muscle. They are located behind the back upper part of your arm. The triceps are flabby in most women for two reasons. We don't use them very often and a woman's skin behind her arms is thinner than in other parts of the body. They are also a fat storage. The counterpart of the triceps in the lower body are the inner thighs—hard to tighten, soft and jelly-like.

An interesting thing about the triceps is that most everyone, including bodybuilders and athletes, will look like their triceps are hanging down when they stand with their arms straight out at shoulder level, palms facing forward.

This is due to the location and shape of the muscle and does not mean flabby triceps. The test for flab is to shake your arm while in that unflattering position.

Talking about shaking your arm, if you want to avoid calling attention to your triceps while wearing a sleeveless blouse, don't wave enthusiastically when you see a friend. The discreet way is to bend your elbow (this stretches the triceps so they won't hang down) and just bend your fingers up-and-down. Some women do the "beauty queen wave" (bend your elbow and gently turn your hand back and forth) but I frankly think this looks really silly on anyone other than a real beauty queen.

The exercises

Exercises are done with dumbbells and rubber bands, which you can buy in your local hardware or *palengke*. They can be done at home, in the gym or even in the office (you can keep your equipment under your desk). Do the exercises on alternating days.

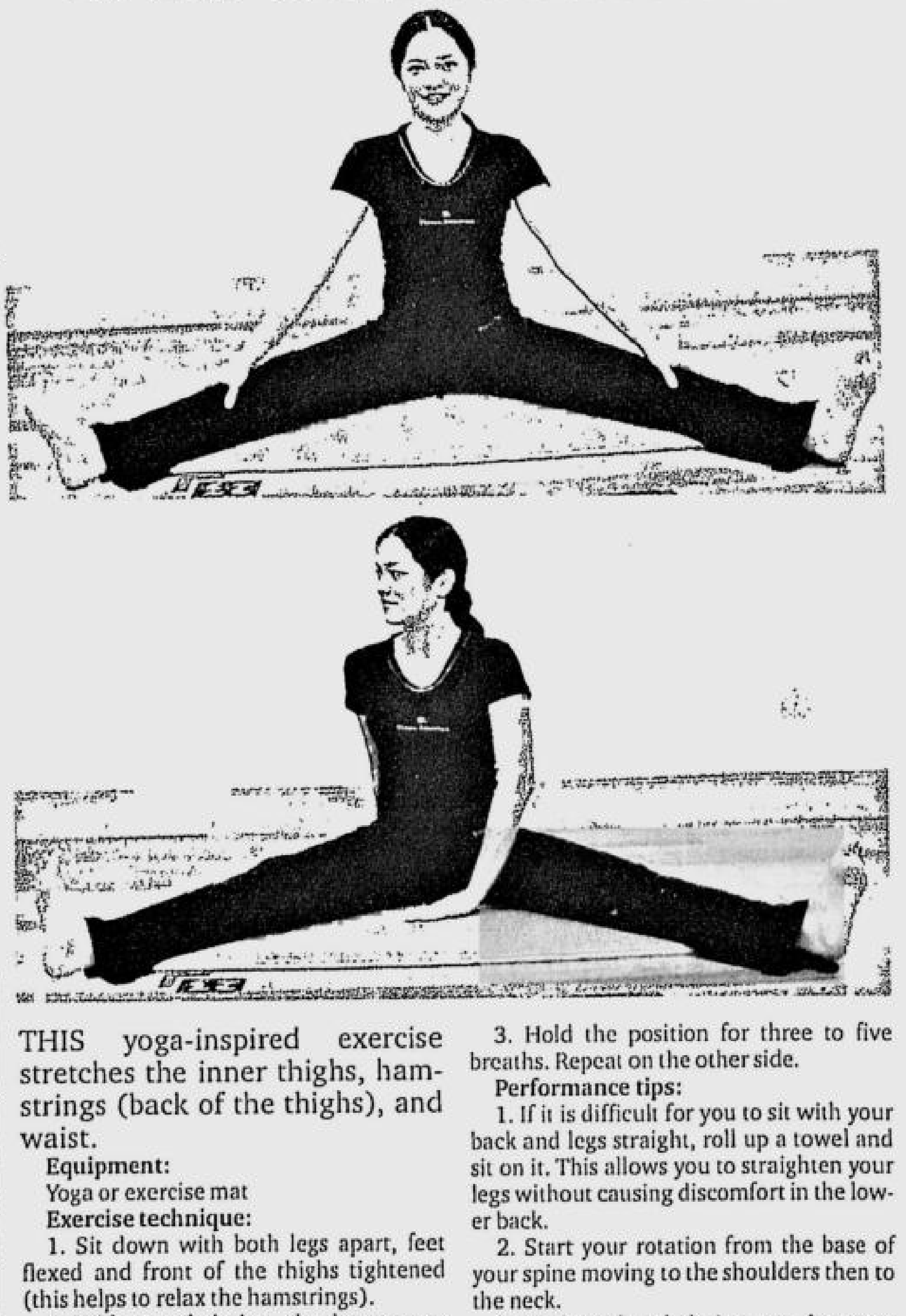
Go to www.tinajuanfitness.info and click on "Exercises." Under "Shoulders," look for the following exercises: "Alternating Front Arm Raise," "Side Arm Raise" and "Straight Arm Shoulder Extension with rubber band."

Under "Biceps," look for "Alternating Biceps Curl" or "Bicep Curl with Tubing."

Under "Triceps," look for "Standing Triceps Kickback" and "Supine Triceps Extension."

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Full straddle with waist rotation



THIS yoga-inspired exercise stretches the inner thighs, hamstrings (back of the thighs), and waist.

Equipment:

Yoga or exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Sit down with both legs apart, feet flexed and front of the thighs tightened (this helps to relax the hamstrings).

2. With an exhalation, slowly rotate to your left side while moving your left hand behind you and your right hand between your legs.

3. Hold the position for three to five breaths. Repeat on the other side.

Performance tips:

1. If it is difficult for you to sit with your back and legs straight, roll up a towel and sit on it. This allows you to straighten your legs without causing discomfort in the lower back.

2. Start your rotation from the base of your spine moving to the shoulders then to the neck.

3. With each exhalation, gently rotate the spine a little further.

Repetitions:

One to two times per side.

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Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

MEDICard

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

If I need medical attention when the coordinator's office is closed, can I get services from a non-affiliated doctor and later file reimbursement of my expenses from MEDICard?

No, not unless your condition is considered to be emergency in nature. In which case, you are advised to go directly to the emergency room of the accredited facility for immediate treatment. The ER staff will notify the medical coordinator of your admission. Otherwise, you may opt to go to accredited mall-based clinics which usually operate on extended hours and are generally open even on holidays.

Meet your MEDICard Team

MEDICard accredited specialist, **Dr. Benjamin M. Abela Jr.** was conferred doctor of Medicine at the University of the Philippines. He later chose to take specialty training in the field of Ophthalmology and a subspecialization for the illness Glaucoma. He earned his fellowship training for the latter at the University of Lund in Sweden. Dr. Abela is also the Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology of the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Muntinlupa. For consultations, members may visit him at his clinic, Room 6 of the Annex Bldg. of Makati Medical Center, Mondays to Fridays except Wednesdays from 9 AM to 12 noon.

Contract Signing

ISO 9001: 2000 CERTIFIED

C & E CORPORATION signed recently its corporate healthcare agreement with MEDICard. Seated (L-R) are MEDICard's Luis Montoya (EVP & GM) & Dr. Nicanor Montoya (President) with C & E's Judo Carlo Allaroy (Bus. Dev. & Admin. Mngr.) & Responsive Consultants' President, Tess Buenaventura; Standing (L-R) are MEDICard's Voltaire Victoria (Mktg. & Sales Mngr.) & Virgini a Lampa (Mktg. Asst.) with Ging Ongsitco (C & E Co. Nurse) & Josie Buebo-Lopez (Responsive-Sales & Mktg. Officer). C & E Corp. is a joint venture company of Chiyoda Corp. of Japan and EEI Corp of the Philippines

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 818-2161. For group or corporate membership, dial 812-8360, 817-5136 or 817-4985 and look for a membership consultant. For Cebu Sales Office call (032) 253-5031 .

TEXT MEDICARD: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch Mobile) or 4627 (Smart & Talk N' Text).
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asia Pacific Region to be ISO CERTIFIED

Altered state of consciousness

Part 3

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

I WAS surprised I did not feel any fear at all. Normally I would have panicked at the mere thought of being hit by that monstrous-looking bolo. But I felt confident I would not get cut or wounded.

I was in an altered state of consciousness. In technical terms, I was probably on the Theta level of the brain waves. That is about four to seven cycles per second on the electroencephalogram (EEG). That is the deep trance when your body becomes numb and feels no pain.

How Utol Jess was able to put me in that state in seconds was, to me, quite remarkable. It was as if my whole body knew what was coming and created a shield against the blows.

What was strange was when I sent a text message to my wife about what happened, she asked whether my eyes were closed or open when I was being hacked. I didn't know why she asked that.

I replied that my eyes were closed. Romy said otherwise, however. "No, your eyes were open. I was looking at you all along and you never closed your eyes!" How come I thought my eyes were closed?

Eyes wide open

Romy was right because I could remember seeing the bolo being raised and coming right at me with some force, enough to cut a deep wound on my body. Yet the only thing I got from those blows were some welts and hematoma on my stomach and thigh.

After my "blessing," my other three companions were "blessed" in exactly the same manner, one after the other. In the case of JR Villanueva and Boyet del Rosario, the blessing was performed by Utol Jess' assistant, Utol Sonny Maranan. Utol Jess did it for Romy Macapagal and me.

After the "baptism of fire," we were all congratulated and our hands shaken by every member of the group there in their distinctive style. We have become "brothers" in the Haring Bakal organization and were to be addressed from then on as "utol." My friend, Ramon Jaime, sent a text message saying I should now be called "Jimming Putik" after the *anting-anting* legend, Nardong Putik, of Cavite.

Keeping the power alive

All four of us could not describe the feeling after undergoing the dangerous ritual. We felt a strong affinity or bond with every member of the group. Later, Ruben said, we would be given the *oracion* or secret prayer to keep alive the power given to us.

We were to wear red T-shirts on which would be written the power words to protect us from danger. We were to refrain from eating meat, from harming others and from having sex on Tuesdays and Fridays with our wives. I remarked, "that means we can have sex with women other than our spouses?" They gave me a "don't-be-smart" kind of look so I shut up.

Other observations while the blessing was going on: The atmosphere was one of complete silence and reverence. There was an air of solemnity. When the pictures I took were developed, I noticed everybody was in a trance-like state.

The energy of the place changed while the blessing was going on.

Romy and JR said when I was about to be hit with the bolo, my aura became very strong and prominent, as if I was surrounded by a big halo. "You were also sitting straight. Your body straightened up as if prepared for the blows to come." They were right. I was in fact in another state of consciousness. I felt I was not myself at that moment.

A state of mind

I remember that was the same state of mind I had when I walked on fire in Tagaytay in the early '80s. It must be the same state of mind people have when lying down on the table of a faith healer while being operated on.

Now I can understand how those who flagellate themselves during Holy Week must feel while their backs are being hit with sharp objects. This can be done only through a long, disciplined mind conditioning process.

I also understand now that the power of the *anting-anting* does not lie in the object, but in the mind. Without strong mental focus and complete confidence, the *anting-anting* won't work. As I have always said, "The mind knows no limits, aside from those it accepts."

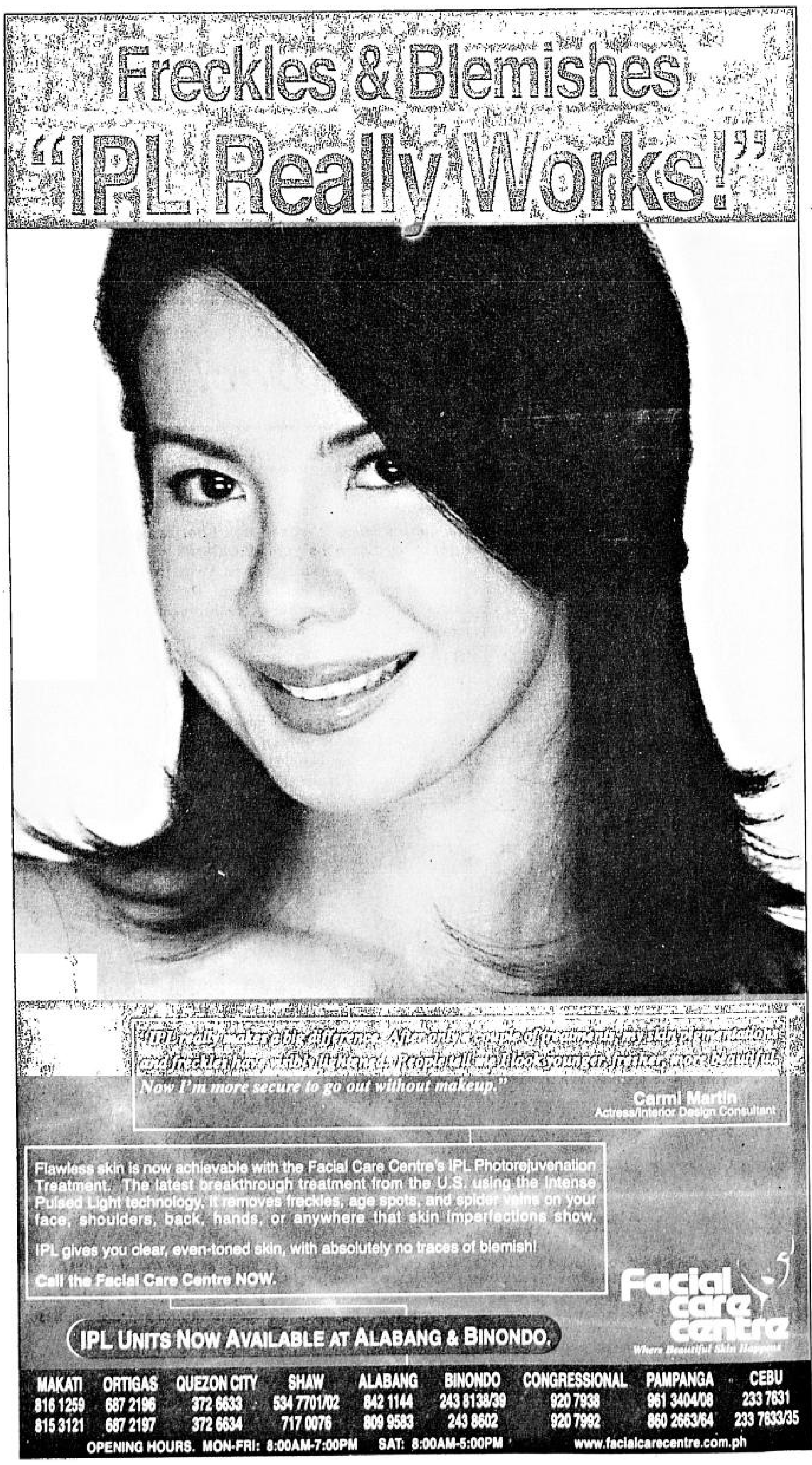
There was also something else in the pictures. The bolo held by Jess Verallo and Sonny Maranan as they were doing the blessing appeared to have become transparent and ethereal!

As to whether an *anting-anting* or an *oracion* can stop a bullet from piercing one's body, I suspend my judgment until I witness one myself—but not necessarily being shot at myself. I don't think I will go to that extent to prove a point. As a matter of fact, I have absolutely no intention of experiencing being hacked myself.

When I volunteered to sit on that bench, I really didn't know what was going to happen. Romy Macapagal knew but decided that, since I was brave enough to volunteer, he would summon enough courage to sit down and be blessed, too. He never knew I did it out of ignorance and not out of bravery!

Next week: The spirit Ang Suh explains the initiation rite from an esoteric point of view.

Listen to to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 7-8:30 p.m.



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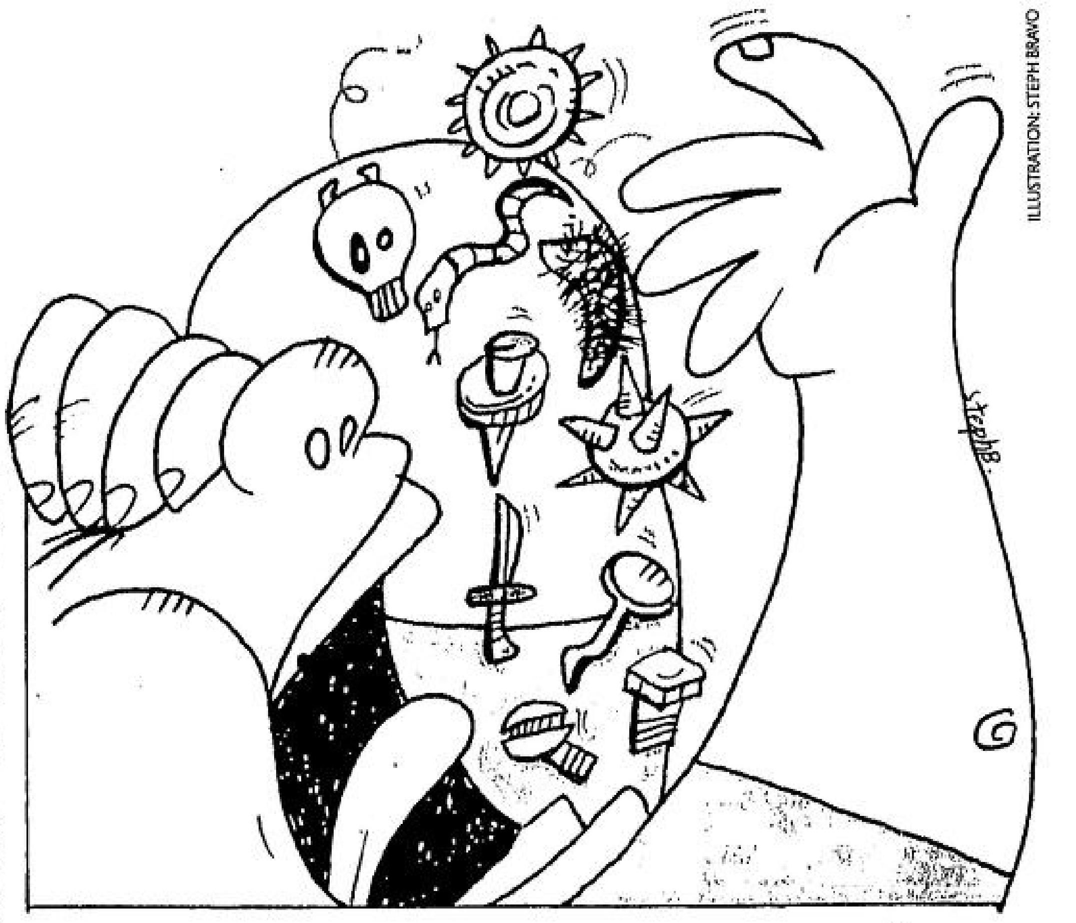

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

10 easy ways to make yourself sick

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

"Know thyself? If I know myself, I'd run away."—Goethe

THE MOST terrifying thing, according to the famous thinker and scientist Carl Jung, is to accept one's self completely. Goethe's thinking shows he has such a good grasp of reality and the ability to see things as they truly are.

But do we actually see? And are there many ways of "seeing"? Does the mind see? Do the heart and spirit have visions of their own?

Therapists believe the mind can be your doom or your deliverance. And if you let your mind run amuck with fears, traumas and insecurities, you will surely get sick. With all endeavors, everything begins with a thought. How it develops into a plan, which is translated into action, is entirely up to us.

People often ask: How can I be healthier? Many complaints about my prescriptions for wellness are that they are difficult to follow. So, this time, let's do a little reverse psychology. Let's make a quick run-down of the things we so easily do to hurt our body, mind and spirit.

Checklist for self-destruction:

1. **Brood.** Allow your worst fears, past or present, to control you. Spend an hour or two thinking about all the emotional pain, disappointments, harassment and failures until you are overcome completely.

2. **Wallow in self-pity.** You are the victim, the underdog, the unappreciated disgruntled employee, the neglected and abused wife, the misunderstood friend, the overlooked sibling, the forgotten parent. Blame everything and everyone else but yourself for your misery.

3. **Stay in a state of inertia.** Do nothing. Allow the forces in your life to control you. You are powerless against domineering individuals/situations. Without a say on your personal happiness, you simply let others dictate to you how you should live your life.

4. **Pop a sleeping pill.** Make it your best friend. By making it part of your regular regimen, your problems will temporarily fade away and not have the power to hurt you—for a short while.

5. **Give in to your addictions and cravings.** Don't do anything in moderation. Let drugs, alcohol, sugar, caffeine, fatty/junk food and carbohydrates rule your life.

6. **Make time your enemy.** Run against it, instead of with it. Stay out every night. Give yourself only three hours of sleep daily. Workaholism, all-night partying, all-day shopping are your feel-good therapies.

7. **Do not exercise.** Do not lift a finger and engage in any form of activity. That includes physical workouts, mental and spiritual pursuits. Do not go to the gym or walk in your neighborhood, read a book or meditate and pray.

8. **Ban levity from your day.** Smiles, humor or laughter are taboo. Let nothing amuse you. Be cranky. Let anger reign. Long faces are in. Snap at everyone within striking distance. Spare no one. Take no prisoners. Take your frustration out on your family, co-workers and household help.

Inflate your smallest difficulty and turn it into a crisis. Magnify your issues and hold everyone hostage to your fears. Imagine the headache becoming a silent stroke, the palpitation a heart attack, the benign cyst a malignant tumor. Announce to the world that you are sick and use it as an excuse to withdraw from life.

9. **Do not give thanks.** Thanksgiving is alien to you. All the goodness and blessings that you have received and continue to receive should not be given any value. You believe that it is God's obligation to you and you are entitled to whatever you get.

10. **Do not love.** Hang a "do not enter" sign on the door of your heart. Keep it closed and unfeeling, and pretend to the rest of the world that you can live without it. Sacrifice your happiness to your ambitions.

Do you see how easy it is to make yourself sick? Modern-day thinkers Dr. Deepak Chopra and Dr. Gary Zukav both say the mind, body and spirit are inseparable. Remember that believing is becoming—that thought has the power to manifest in the physical realm.

To conclude, what is my prescription for wellness? Obviously, completely the opposite of everything in the checklist!

Love and light!

GODIVA Safe Sea Kids is a sunscreen lotion that protects children from the sting of jellyfish, sea nettle, sea lice and coral.

Two-in-one summer protection for kids

PROTECT a child's exposed skin from the stings of marine creatures like the jellyfish with the Godiva Safe Sea Kids.

The product is the only sunscreen lotion scientifically developed to protect children from the sting of jellyfish, sea nettle, sea lice and coral.

Godiva Safe Sea also provides sun protection for kids' sensitive skin that does not have adequate natural defense against the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. The two-in-one Godiva Safe Sea product has an SPF (sun protection factor) of 30+.

Apply generous amounts of Godiva Safe Sea Kids on lips, hands, ears, feet, neck and shoulders about 30 minutes before a child goes outside so the sunscreen could bond with his/her skin. Reapply every two hours, after sweating or swimming.

Godiva Safe Sea Kids is a waterproof sunblock suited for swimming and is suitable even for children with sensitive skin.

It is available at Watsons, Mercury Drug, Landmark, Robinsons, Gaisano and dive shop outlets.